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ENGLAND UNDER EDWARD VII

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ENGLAND UNDER EDWARD VII

BY

J. A. FARRER

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PREFACE

A PERIOD of eight centuries divides the reign of William the Conqueror from that of Edward VII, and in that space of time as many as thirty-four Sovereigns ruled, yet Sir William Harcourt once made bold to say that since the Conqueror the seventh Edward was the greatest of all. Whether by "greatest" he meant the greatest politically or morally, or from both points of view combined, Sir William did not explain, but in any case it is best to leave his judgment undisputed, and to let the chief events of the King's reign produce what impression they may on the minds of those who may care to remember them.

In our domestic politics the King constitutionally played little but an acquiescent part; his duty was mainly to assent to and sign such laws as were passed. Hence in the story of his reign the legislation of the period from 1901 to 1910 only calls for rather summary treatment. But in foreign politics the King availed himself to the full of the freedom of action which the Constitution still allows to a monarch, and it is in his action in this field that the interest of his reign mainly lies. And, though some have contended that at all times he was the mere servant of the foreign policy of his Foreign Ministers, first of Lord Lansdowne, and after 1905 of Sir Edward (Lord) Grey, the balance of the best contemporary evidence, both English and foreign, is to the effect that he was in the main his own Foreign Minister, initiating, commanding, and controlling all our policy towards other Powers.

It is this fact that lends its chief interest to the King's reign, and renders it one of the most important in our political history; and for this reason our relations with foreign

Powers must inevitably fill the foremost place in any picture of the first decade of this century. For it was then that our foreign policy took a decided swerve to the side of France, and that her secular rival, Germany, stepped into the place of our leading potential enemy. It is, indeed, scarcely too much to say that war, in spirit at least, raged between ourselves and Germany during the whole period. This is the chief historical fact of the reign, nor without much allusion to this aspect of it can the causes ever be rightly understood of that ultimate war of 1914 which was to prove to the world a disaster of such illimitable magnitude and of such measureless consequence.

The chief question of the King's reign is, how far the mental international atmosphere produced by it was conducive to the maintenance of peace or the reverse; and, since such atmosphere is mainly the product of the speeches of leading statesmen and of influential organs of the Press, it is in these above all that the causes of subsequent events must be traced. For this purpose German no less than English authorities have been consulted, in the hope that in this way the point of view of both England and Germany may be presented with the utmost possible fairness and impartiality. History is only of value in so far as it is able to rise above the bias of nationality and to deal with the world's affairs from the same standpoint of indifference that might be expected of an observer from another planet.

The following list comprises the German authorities which it has been found necessary and useful to consult:—

1. Professor Schiemann's *Deutschland und die grosse Politik*: a republication of his weekly articles on foreign affairs in the *Kreuzzeitung* from the year 1901. As giving the feeling of the moment from week to week, this work was justly described in the *Quarterly Review* (July 1908, p. 283) as "more authoritative and influential than any other regular feature of German journalism." In answer to the rebuke of the Reviewer that he was habitually anti-English, the Professor disclaimed all hostility to England:

what he desired was an Anglo-German alliance for the strengthening of the world-position of both countries. It was not England that he attacked, but only the systematic Press campaign against Germany which he thought had lasted from the time of the Venezuelan conflict in 1903. The poisoning of English opinion by papers like *The Times*, the *National Review*, and the *Standard* had made the alliance he desired among the most improbable contingencies of the future (viii. 317).

2. Prince Bülow's *Reden* or Speeches, in three volumes, from 1897 to 1909. As the years of the Chancellor's office were almost concurrent with King Edward's reign, these speeches are of special importance; their general excellence being so far recognized that Sir Charles Dilke spoke of one of them made in November 1906 as "one of the best ever made by any statesman."

3. Prince Bülow's *Deutsche Politik*. This book was published in 1916, in the middle of the war, and gives the German view of the causes which produced it.

4. Count Reventlow's *Deutschland Auswärtige Politik*. This work is rather marred by a general avoidance of all reference to the authorities for the Count's statements. Its tone is far less moderate than that of Prince Bülow, and represents the more decided mistrust of this country that was felt by certain sections of the German people.

5. Otto Hammann's *Zur Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*: a German history of international politics from 1897 onwards. The writer's official position gave him much insight into the workings of the diplomacy of the period.

6. Baron von Siebert's *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Ententepolitik der Vorkriegsjähre*. As the editor was formerly Secretary of the Russian Embassy in London, his collection of the diplomatic correspondence between the Russian Foreign Ministers and the Russian Ambassadors abroad between 1909 and 1912 is of the greatest historical interest and importance.

7. Baron von Eckhardstein's *Ten Years in the Court of St. James'*. The Baron was Chargé d'Affaires in London

whilst Count Hatzfeldt was the German Ambassador, and the intimacy he had with the King, with Lord Lansdowne, and Mr. Chamberlain gives special interest to his testimony regarding the politics of the closing nineteenth century and the opening twentieth.

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England Under Edward VII

CHAPTER I

1901

THE NEW REIGN AND THE NEW POLICY

THE new King's long exclusion, as Prince of Wales, by his mother's Court from all share in the foreign politics of the country naturally prompted him to devote his talents to the service of his country in that direction. He had been "frequently restive," Lord Knollys told Dilke on May 3, 1882, at being debarred from all Foreign Office information. Lord Granville, at that time Foreign Secretary, would not let him have it, "for fear he should let it out." So the Prince tried, through Lord Knollys and Sir Henry Ponsonby, to get the Queen to direct Lord Granville to send him the confidential telegrams that came from abroad; but, as the Queen persisted in her refusal, it fell to Sir Charles Dilke, then Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs in the Gladstone Ministry, to keep the Prince privately informed from day to day of the papers that passed at critical times (Gwynn's *Life of Dilke*, i. 426–7). And again, when the Prince applied to the Government in July 1888 for a military command in Egypt, "the Queen at once interfered to stop it," and the Cabinet decided to support the Queen's refusal (*ib.* i. 473).

The great intimacy and friendship that arose in this way between Dilke and the Prince lends interest to Dilke's description of his character. The Prince was "a good deal under the influence of the last speaker," reflecting the mind now of the Queen, now of Mr. Chamberlain, and anon of

Dilke himself. In conversation, though no apparent impression was made at the time, he listened so well that, when talking to somebody else, he would often repeat the very thing he had appeared not to heed. Dilke thought he had "less real brain-power than his mother," though "very sharp in a way." It is more illuminating to know that he was "a strong Conservative and a still stronger Jingo, really agreeing with the Queen's politics, and wanting to take everything everywhere in the world, and to keep everything if possible" (*ib.* i. 500).

Queen Victoria herself had often been strongly Jingo, as when in the years 1876–8 she had used all her influence with Lord Beaconsfield to embark on war with Russia; she could not "remain the Sovereign of a country that was letting itself down to kiss the feet of the great barbarians, the retarders of all liberty and civilization that exists." And her son on his accession undertook to tread in his mother's footsteps. Assuming, therefore, that he carried to the throne the annexationist ideals that he had cherished as Prince, the King must have belonged to the same school of thought as Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner, under whose auspices Jingoism in the South African War had then held high revel for more than a year. Lord Suffield's statement that when Prince he was "greatly distressed" at the recall of Sir Bartle Frere from the Transvaal (*Memories*, 329) is an indication of his probable political inclination when he succeeded to the throne on his mother's death on January 22, 1901.

At that time Imperialism was at its height, and never did King find himself in happier harmony with his subjects. The new ideas of the century tended to a complete reversal of those of the Victorian era. Abstention from Continental quarrels, splendid isolation, were the fetishes of an inglorious age, and unworthy of a mighty Empire. And though *The Times* so recently as 1899 had declared that no cordial understanding was possible between our country and France, and that, whilst we had always respected the German character, we had come to despise France, Imperialist

thought inclined to the reversal of this attitude, and to see in France the best friend of the future. The King's political sympathies with France were of long and strong standing. Twenty years before, in November 1880, when the Prince of Wales returned from a visit to Berlin, he reported to Dilke that, whilst the German Court regarded Dilke as " a most dangerous man " and as " a French spy," it said the same of himself (Dilke's *Life*, i. 341). And so it always remained. There is no reason to dispute Lord Redesdale's statement that in Germany the King was regarded as " a dangerous enemy always "(*Memoirs*, i. 178).

But that the King's Conservatism had its Liberal side is illustrated by the curious fact attested by Mr. Legge, that *Reynolds's Newspaper*, of decidedly Radical views, was " carefully read by Queen Victoria's eldest son from his early manhood until his death " (*More About King Edward*, 132). The same writer portrays him as " a man of moods," easily infected with an " unreasoning dislike " of any person calumniated, " very quick to take umbrage at some purely imaginary offence " (*King Edward in His True Colours*, 312). His was a will of an iron nature, " not devoid of obstinacy " (Legge, in *Fortnightly Review*, xcii. 601) ; " when he was opposed, when he was more than ordinarily vexed, the inflexible will-power asserted itself : *Le Roy le veult*. It was the end of it, the ukase of the autocrat, an amalgam of Cæsar and Charlemagne " (*More About King Edward*, 13).

Happily other contemporary writers present a more pleasing picture. Lord Redesdale dwells on his facility of forgiveness, on his zeal in the service of his friends, on his ready help to redress an injustice (*Memoirs*, i. 172). And Lord Suffield, with the experience of forty years, bears witness to his never saying a cross or unkind word to anybody, to his never forgetting a friend or ever refusing a courtesy. " Absolute impartiality " and essential fairness were other virtues recognized by Lord Suffield, who came to love the King " as much as one man could love another." And his great capacities were no

less recognized in Germany than at home, Prince Bülow declaring that his influence made itself felt from the very beginning of the century (*Deutsche Politik*, 57).

A King of such a character on coming to the throne was little likely to sink his opinions and wishes in those of his Ministers, or to cease to take his lifelong interest in foreign affairs at the very moment when the custom of the Constitution gave him the widest powers to control them, as he conscientiously hoped and intended, for the benefit both of his own country and of the world. What King would consent to be a mere puppet in the hands of his Ministers? His nephew, the Kaiser of Germany, was no such puppet, who, though his Chancellor took all responsibility from his shoulders, enjoyed the right of independent personal initiative (Bülow's *Reden*, i. 395). And our Constitution allowed the King of England almost as free an influence over foreign policy, or over the choice between peace and war.

The Kaiser, it was said at the time, "took every opportunity of manifesting his friendly feeling for England and her rulers" (*Ann. Reg.* 1901, 285). Much was forgiven him by reason of his attendance at the Queen's last illness, when Lord Suffield says that she died literally in his arms, and at her funeral; when he returned to Germany on February 3rd no one stood higher than he did in popular favour, and it was through cheering crowds that he drove from Paddington Station to Marlborough House, whence, after lunching with the King, he was accompanied by his uncle to Charing Cross Station for his return journey. But it was unfortunate that whatever favour he won in England from his attendance at the funeral, he lost in Germany. There was great indignation at the length of his stay in England, and at his bestowal of the Order of the Black Eagle on the victorious Lord Roberts, and it needed skilful speaking by the Chancellor in the Reichstag to mitigate this ill-feeling by contending that these things constituted no violation of German neutrality as against the Boers, and by expressing the hope that England and Germany would agree to work together in future in peace and for peace (*Reden*, i. 185).

And on the day after the Queen's funeral he dwelt on the fact that during the whole of her long reign the Queen had studied always to cultivate peaceable and friendly relations with Germany, with the implication of a hope for a continuance of the same.

But the omens were not altogether propitious. In Austria, for instance, when the Reichsrath met on January 31st, and the President referred in appropriate terms to the death of the Queen, some of the Pan-Germans and Social Democrats indecently shouted out, "Down with England!" and "Long live the Boers!" and the German Press continued offensively anti-British in tone. And many of the Kaiser's speeches, although England and Germany had been brought into common action against the Boxer rising in China, had left a bad impression which the explanations or corrections by the Chancellor only partially removed. The Kaiser's exhortation to the troops departing for China on July 27, 1900, at Bremenshaven, to give no mercy to the enemy, to take no prisoners from them, was defended against Bebel, the Socialist, on the ground that this terrible utterance was made at a time when it was universally believed in Europe that all the Europeans in Peking had been massacred (*Reden*, i. 148); and three days later he contradicted Bebel's assertion that the speech had been delivered subsequently to the arrival of the news of the release of the prisoners. He affirmed that it was believed at the time in every European Foreign Office and in every Cabinet that no single European in Peking had escaped death (*ib.* i. 153). Some other remarks by the Kaiser, thought to be a menace to England, had been made at the naval Casino at Wilhelmshaven on July 3, 1900, and called for explanation. The ocean, said the Kaiser, was indispensable for Germany's greatness; the time had come when no decision could be taken on it without the consent of Germany and her Kaiser; in great questions of foreign policy Germany was not going to be pushed aside; to prevent that by a ruthless use of the proper or even sharpest means was only his duty and fairest privilege.

These remarks had been made ten minutes after the arrival of the dispatch announcing the murder in Peking of the German Ambassador, Von Ketteler, which naturally caused the Kaiser's blood to flow faster than usual through his veins (*ib.* i. 149–53).

But it may be doubted whether these extenuating explanations received any hearing, and the Kaiser had to bear the blame of the sympathy of his subjects with the Boer Republics. It was forgotten that in May and June of 1899 the German as well as the Dutch Government had sought to avert hostilities by pressing on President Kruger the wisdom of moderation, and by warning him of the danger that would threaten him if he rejected offers of mediation (*ib.* i. 161–8). And the war had not lasted many months before the indeterminate nature of the laws of maritime warfare had brought us into conflict with Germany on the sea. On December 28, 1899, the German steamer *Bundesrath* was captured by an English vessel, to be searched for contraband, and was sent to an English Prize Court at Durban; the mail steamer *General* was detained at Aden on January 4, 1900; and so with other vessels. As belligerents we were within our right in thus searching suspected vessels, but it was claimed by Germany that the right should not be exercised beyond necessity nor in an improper manner. The *General* and the *Hertzog* were released without much difficulty, but the case of the *Bundesrath* was more serious, and for some weeks we were "within a hair's-breadth of a rupture" with Germany (Eckhardstein, *Ten Years at the Court of St. James'*, 152). It went so far that it had been decided in Germany to send an Admiral with an ultimatum from the Kaiser to Lord Salisbury; but fortunately Lord Salisbury chanced to anticipate its arrival by authorizing Baron Eckhardstein to telegraph to his Government his compliance with their wishes, namely, the immediate release of the vessel with adequate compensation and an assurance that German mail steamers should not be troubled any more. No contraband having been found on board, Lord Salisbury felt justified in thus acting without waiting for the Admiralty's

report (*ib.* 160–1). British captains were instructed not to interfere with German merchantmen except in seas near to the actual scene of hostilities. And so Count Bülow explained the facts on January 19, 1900; but of course such an incident left its sting behind it, and, though it was of the kind to justify Germany's chief reason for strengthening her fleet, it naturally did not increase on our side the wish that she should do so.

It was thus in a storm-tossed world that King Edward found himself at his accession called upon to play his part. Suspicions, jealousies, and intrigues between nations flourished as seldom before. There had, indeed, been a sort of concert of the Powers against China, but subject to a constant danger of the triumphant forces turning their swords against one another. A dispute, for instance, arose between the British and the Russian military authorities about a strip of land at Tien-tsin, which the Russians claimed as part of China's concessions to them, but which the British had used for a railway-siding. The sentries of the rival claimants were posted within a yard of each other, and but for the wise decision to submit the quarrel to arbitration there was very good promise of a sanguinary war. Russia rather than Germany was the Power which at that time most perturbed her neighbours. The Siberian railway, making the Far East accessible to her armies, was approaching completion, and, indeed, reached it in November. And whilst the other Powers were negotiating with China against her granting special mining or railway concessions to foreigners in Manchuria, Mongolia, or Turkestan, Russia was trying to make a separate treaty with China which would have given her a protectorate in Manchuria. But in this purpose she was foiled by the protest of Great Britain, Germany, the United States, and Japan. We, indeed, were bound by an agreement with Germany of October 16, 1900, to maintain the integrity of China, and Count Bülow declared on March 15, 1901, that there had been no secret clauses about Manchuria nor reference to it in this treaty, and that Germany's only interests there were of a commercial character; her

only desire being the policy of the "open door," or the equal commercial privileges of all nations.

But the more immediate preoccupation of this country at the King's accession was the South African trouble; for despite official assurances in the autumn of 1900 that the war was over, assurances which went far to secure the Unionist Government a continuance of power at the General Election of 1900, the war took on such a prospect of interminability that many men began to advocate a settlement on terms as distinct from an unconditional surrender, to be followed by the loss of Boer independence, on which Lord Salisbury's Government insisted. This division about the war was the predominant political issue of the year, all domestic legislation sinking to a position of comparative insignificance. It is not unusual to mark the beginning of a new reign by an amnesty to enemies or by the termination of a war, but there was no hint of such a thing in the King's Speech from the Throne to Parliament on February 14, 1901; and even further war was indicated by the statement that proposals would be submitted to its judgment "for increasing the efficiency of my military forces." Yet the King wished the war stopped. Says Mr. Wilfrid Scawen Blunt: "The very first object which he set himself to bring about as King was to put an end to the Boer War, not so much perhaps on any humane principle as ending what he was well aware had become the cause of vast discredit to England, and in this he succeeded, notwithstanding the Tory obstinacy of those in power" (*Diaries*, ii. 34). Again: "He stopped the Boer War, knowing how unpopular it was making England on the Continent and everywhere, and how much we were becoming despised for our childish attempts at subduing this sturdy little people" (*ib.* ii. 321).

Nevertheless the war dragged on for another year, a Conference on February 28th at Middleburg between Lord Kitchener and Louis Botha to discuss peace terms ending in nothing. Botha "tried very hard for some kind of independence," but was met by an absolute refusal on Kitchener's part even to discuss a point which seemed to

him so fraught with the prospect of a renewal of the war in the future. So, as the terms offered by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Alfred Milner, though not illiberal in themselves, fell short of this most important concession of all, the Peace Conference failed entirely, and the war continued its miserable course, to the great disappointment of all reasonable men and to the growing disfavour of England in all neutral countries. The presumption is, therefore, that the King's personal wish for peace was so far lukewarm as to be conditional on annexation accompanying it.

The customary phrases of "seeing it through" or of "fighting to a finish" served as substitutes for all argument or reflection, and Mr. Balfour waxed eloquent on the wisdom of not withdrawing our hands from the plough to which we had put them. By the simple plan of declaring the enemy's country annexed every man fighting for his country became a rebel and ceased to have the claim to fair treatment of an ordinary enemy. The recrudescence of the war, after Lord Roberts' occupation of Pretoria in August 1900 and the proclamation that therewith the war was over, followed by renewed hostilities by the Boers in Lord Roberts' rear, led to great embitterment of feeling. The consequent burning on a large scale of the enemy's homes and villages, necessitating the herding of homeless non-combatants in concentration camps, where the mortality was on so appalling a scale that as many as 261 children out of 1,100 died in six or seven weeks before March 21, 1901, happily did not pass without protest, though without result, from many Liberal statesmen of weight and influence opposed to the Unionist Government. Thus on February 16th, in the debate on the Address, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal leader, did not hesitate to denounce the military conduct of the war, nor to press for offering the enemy such terms as, if offered after the occupation of Pretoria, should have ended the war. This was the signal for a battle-royal throughout the year between divergent Liberal opinions; nor could any greater issue have divided parties than the question whether the war was just or unjust, or its conduct

conformable or not with the customs of civilized warfare. But the contention that the Government's opinion on these issues was the only possible right and patriotic one, and any criticism wrong or treasonable, was intolerable; and Campbell-Bannerman rightly repudiated the doctrine that in time of war it was the duty of an Opposition to sit still idly whilst the power of the country was being used for purposes of which it disapproved. Lord Rosebery's regret, expressed on July 19th at the City Liberal Club, that the Liberal Party had not shown a heartier sympathy with the national opinion about the war (*Ann. Reg.* 1901, 165), postulated that any and every war that was favoured of the multitude demanded the assent and approval of every lover of his country; and we owe it to Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Lloyd George, and Lord Morley that this duty of passive acquiescence was not suffered to take root in our political traditions.

But Sir Henry's claim at Edinburgh on May 31st, that the whole Liberal Party, save an "insignificant section," was united in its condemnation of "the most unwise as well as the most unworthy policy of enforcing unconditional surrender" upon the enemy, was open to the objection that the "insignificant section" of Liberals had for its leaders politicians like Mr. Asquith, Mr. Haldane, and Sir Edward Grey. These Liberal Imperialists and the others hurled contradictory policies against one another all the year. A Liberal meeting at the Queen's Hall on June 19th, presided over by Mr. Labouchere, demanded the immediate cessation of "an unjust and desolating war" by the offer of complete independence to the two Republics; whilst the next day, at the Liverpool Street Station, Mr. Asquith pronounced the restoration of such independence impossible, declaring that the Boer War had been forced upon us, and had neither been intended nor desired by the Government. The general note of all Liberal Imperialist speeches was the absolute justice and necessity of the war; the impossibility of ending it on any terms short of annexation; the comparative humanity of the concentration camps; the righteousness

of the devastation ; and unbounded confidence in Sir Alfred Milner. When Sir Alfred returned on May 24th for a brief holiday, he was driven off straight to Marlborough House, there and then to be created Lord Milner of St. James' and Cape Town ; with this enhanced dignity being afforded the opportunity the very next day, at a luncheon given to him by Mr. Chamberlain at Claridge's Hotel, of soundly castigating his political adversaries.

Those adversaries, however, continued unabashed. Mr. Frederic Harrison, in the *Daily News* of May 30th, denounced the farm-burnings as " a very brutal episode in an infamous war," and as expressly forbidden by the Hague Conference. And Lord Morley on June 4, at Montrose, took the same line. Then on June 14th came the dinner to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Sir William Harcourt at the National Reform Union, at which the former put the riddle, of the answer to which he never heard the end, " When is a war not a war ? When it is carried on by methods of barbarism." The phrase provoked his opponents to such wrath that three days later (June 17th) in a debate on the camps nearly fifty Liberal Unionists abstained from voting by way of protesting against their leader's speech. The most trustworthy evidence of the sufferings endured in these camps came from Miss Hobhouse, who spoke with the competence of an eye-witness ; but the managers of many halls in the country would by no means suffer her to be heard, lest her report should throw a darker shade on the official picture presented by the Government. But Mr. Asquith on September 28th, at Ladybank, came to the Government's aid with the assurance that we were fighting the war " with clean hands," with a clear conscience, and in a just cause : to which comforting words Campbell-Bannerman replied at Stirling on October 2nd that he still adhered to his former statement, to the effect that the burning of farms, the butchering or driving off of flocks and herds, the destruction of mills, or the smashing of furniture and of agricultural implements, were methods of barbarism, as he had said before.

Much at that time depended for the future mutual relations between England and Germany on the mutual good relations between their Sovereigns, whose common domestic sympathies drew them strongly together. Nor could those relations have started with better promise than at the time of the Queen's funeral. The King and the Kaiser had long political talks together, in the course of which the King expressed strong dislike for Russia and France, using strong language about them, and declared that Lord Lansdowne had "no sympathies at all for France" (*Eckhardstein*, 191). Hardly had the Kaiser returned to Germany on February 3rd than on February 23rd the King went to Cronberg to pay his last visit to his dying sister, the Kaiser's mother, the Empress Frederick, whose funeral he and the Queen attended at Potsdam on August 13th of the same year. The Kaiser and the King bore some resemblance to one another; Lord Esher says that no one could see them together without noticing "a curious likeness to each other" (*Influence of King Edward*, 56). And Prince Hohenlöhe, who was German Chancellor from 1894 to his death, at the age of eighty-two, on July 6, 1901, was always reminded by the Kaiser of his grandfather, Prince Albert, both by his voice and by his earnestness of manner. The Kaiser struck him in 1888 as "a wise, conscientious man," who took delight in amusing things and had a fresh, lively manner of talking (*Memoirs*, ii. 395).

But difference of disposition counts for more than genealogical affinity, and it would seem, though Lord Esher says that the uncle and nephew had mutual respect and real admiration for one another, that a spirit of antipathy soon arose between them. Mr. Legge has stated that their mutual relations "lapsed into comparative calm only when they were apart from one another" (*Fortnightly Review*, xcii. 611), and he reports the King, when Prince of Wales, as cutting the Kaiser dead on one occasion at Cowes (*King Edward in His True Colours*, 261): an incident which, if it occurred at all, must have occurred on one of the Kaiser's four visits to Cowes before the year 1896; for after the stir made in

England by his telegram to President Kruger after the Jameson raid he took no more part in the yachting regatta. At those regattas there was constant friction between the King and his nephew, and one day Baron Eckhardstein heard the Kaiser during a dinner on the *Hohenzollern*, with English present, refer to his uncle as " an old peacock " (*Eckhardstein*, 56). And wars have arisen from lighter causes than from a nephew's calling an uncle an old peacock.

But it was not only with the German Kaiser that the King was thrown into close contact at his accession. He had long been intimate with many French statesmen, and notably with M. Clemenceau, who is said to have treated him more familiarly than any of the King's most intimate friends would have done, even when he was only Prince of Wales (Legge, *More About King Edward*, 328). His friend M. Delcassé, Foreign Minister of France since 1898, wished, like the King, to turn the current estrangement between their respective countries into a friendship. So no sooner was the King in a position to use his influence over foreign affairs than, as Mr. Blunt says, " his natural instinct was to use it in the interests of peace, especially with France, where the chief friction was found, and from the first days of his accession he busied himself to bring about a settlement of their international differences " (*Diaries*, ii. 33). But at the first an alliance with Germany was more likely than one with France. Ever since 1875 there had been tentative movements in such a direction, the overtures coming from Bismarck, who during the Berlin Congress in 1878 prevailed on Lord Beaconsfield to accede to his desire for an Anglo-German defensive treaty (*Eckhardstein*, 133–5). Lord Salisbury, when Prime Minister, meeting the Kaiser on August 8, 1895, on the *Hohenzollern* at Cowes, is said to have proposed a partition of the Ottoman Empire between England, Germany, and Austria : a proposal which must have united us with the Triple Alliance (*ib.* 57–9). In 1898 and 1899 similar approaches to an alliance were renewed, but more serious and more nearly successful negotiations began in 1901, when in January Mr. Chamberlain and

the Duke of Devonshire met Baron Eckhardstein at Chatsworth, and Chamberlain declared himself in favour of a "combination with Germany and an association with the Triple Alliance" as preferable to such a junction with Russia and France (*ib.* 185). Negotiations to that end lasted from the middle of March to the end of May. On March 9th, Baron Holstein, on behalf of Germany, suggested a defensive alliance between Germany and ourselves, and on our side on April 9th Lord Lansdowne discussed with Eckhardstein in general terms the problem of our accession to the Triple Alliance (*ib.* 204, 207, 214). The King, too, is described as in 1901 "quite favourable to an alliance" (*ib.* 60). On April 19th he assured Eckhardstein that he had for years had the greatest sympathy with Germany; that he looked upon England and Germany as natural allies, and thought that together they could police the world and secure its lasting peace, Germany could have as much of colonies and commercial development as she wanted: there was room enough in the world for both of them. He had always tried to dissipate the very great mistrust which some of his Ministers, especially Lord Salisbury, felt for the Kaiser and Count Bülow, but he could not contend for ever with the "perpetual vagaries" of the Kaiser, nor with the abuse and threats of the Flottenverein and its organs (*ib.* 217). There was even some movement towards an Anglo-German-Japanese combination, or towards an Anglo-Japanese agreement with the Triple Alliance (Hammann, *Vorgeschichte*, 86–8). But of all these negotiations the Kaiser was kept in the dark till the February of the following year, when it needed some tact on the part of the Chancellor to tranquillize his Sovereign on the matter. Yet when the Kaiser in November 1899 had, with Count Bülow, met Chamberlain at Windsor, and the Colonial Secretary had raised the question of an alliance, the latter got the distinct impression that both the Kaiser and Count Bülow were "very favourable to the idea" (*Eckhardstein*, 130). And the Kaiser had manifested great satisfaction when told of the conversation at Chatsworth regarding an alliance; so

that it is reasonable to regret that his support was withheld from a scheme which, had it not been wrecked by mutual mistrust, opened up so hopeful an avenue to a peaceful evolution of European history. In any case it is remarkable that at a time when the German Press was raging its worst against us in connection with the Boer War our leading statesmen, the King, Lord Lansdowne, the Duke of Devonshire, and Mr. Chamberlain were seriously desirous of an alliance with the offending country. And it is also of interest to know that in these discussions of 1901 the ultimate partition of Morocco between ourselves and Germany was part of the agreement (*ib.* 222).

Baron Eckhardstein is probably right in thinking that the failure of an alliance with Germany in 1901 led to the encirclement policy against Germany which finally issued in war. Our statesmen, being obsessed with the idea that it was necessary to side either with the Triple Alliance or with France and Russia, the latter alternative naturally presented itself as the only alternative to the scheme that had failed. Thus it was that the political wind began to veer rapidly round from Germany to France, and continued in that direction all through the King's reign. Queen Victoria had always had strong German sympathies, and for the last ten years of her reign our diplomacy had laboured to remove causes of friction with Germany; as by the Anglo-German agreement of 1890, which defined British and German spheres of influence in East, West, and South-west Africa; by the agreement about the Portuguese Colonies, in the event of their becoming purchasable; by our support of Germany in 1897, when she occupied Kiau-chow; by the Yangtse agreement about China in 1900; and most of this after and in spite of the Kruger telegram in January 1896. The Press, led by *The Times*, quickly reflected the new direction, and with the new reign soon came in a new journalism.

Unfortunately M. Delcassé was regarded in Germany as personifying in a higher degree than any other French statesman the long-nursed policy of revenge for 1870

(Bülow, *Deutsche Politik*, 99). The recovery of the lost provinces was well understood to be the hope of the alliance between France and Russia. Therefore when M. Delcassé, on April 22nd, went to St. Petersburg, and was there entertained by the Czar and his Ministers for five days, it was natural for Germany to suspect that the business between them was not solely concerned with the terms of a loan, but had some political reference to herself. And this uneasiness was still further increased when on September 8th King Edward also met the Czar at a family gathering at the Danish Court at Fredensborg; an Anglo-French-Russian combination against the Triple Alliance cast its shadow before the future.

Thus it was that rivalry for the favour of Russia, the land of the countless legions, became for many years the leading motive of the diplomacy of the Powers, and so open a courtship of Russia as seemed implied by the Delcassé visit could so little be allowed to pass unchallenged that the Kaiser gave a banquet in May at Metz, in the presence of the Russian Ambassador, in honour of the Czar's birthday; thereby giving no slight offence to France by this indirect ratification of the Treaty of Frankfort of 1871, in the very capital of Alsace-Lorraine, and only partially atoning for it at a military dinner at Berlin on May 30th by toasting some French officers and the whole French Army in very generous terms.

The King's meeting with the Czar on September 8th at Fredensborg was followed almost immediately by the Kaiser's meeting with him on September 11th in the Bay of Danzig, where together they watched the Kaiser's ships manœuvring and spent what the Kaiser afterwards referred to in a letter to the Czar as some "merry hours" (*Letter* of January 3, 1902). The Kaiser declared that this happy meeting had placed on an unshakable basis his conviction of the security of the peace of Europe for many years. But the Czar and his wife, two most uncertain quantities, were at that very time on their way to France, where they were met on September 18th, off Dunkirk by President Loubet,

and after a naval review of the French Northern Fleet, were entertained for three days at the Palace of Compiègne, and shown what the French Army could do at the great military manœuvres near Rheims. At the luncheon at Fresnes the usual toasts were exchanged between the Czar and the President, and the usual but meaningless stress laid on the purely defensive and pacific nature of the alliance, and on the necessity of the balance of power in Europe; but the enthusiastic welcome of the Russian autocrat by the French multitudes was really for the vast Russian armies of which the Czar's presence was interpreted as an almost certain promise. Otherwise what had France in common with Russia? What reason was there for such ecstasies over a despotism under which in March some four hundred Moscow students had been consigned to a felons' prison and Count Tolstoi, excommunicated by the Holy Synod, had written and published two letters to the Czar against the religious persecution and the "terrible cruelties" which were committed in the Czar's name? But this side of Russian life counted for nothing in the scale against the military force for which the word Russia stood, and which France so sorely needed for any effective war with Germany for the recovery of her lost provinces.

For the success of such a policy English as well as Russian aid was clearly desirable, and M. Delcassé's efforts in this direction soon met with no unready response from our side. Our pull towards France was marked by a campaign, chiefly in our Conservative Press (*The Times, Spectator,* and *National Review*), for an Anglo-French *entente* and the obliteration of our traditional sympathies with Germany (*Schiemann,* iv. 123). The Press of the world, in response to this new direction, busied itself with the discussion of a League of France, Russia, and England for the overthrow of Germany (*ib.* i. 236); and this combination was regarded by M. Hanotaux, once Foreign Minister of France, as the joint work of King Edward and Mr. Chamberlain (*La Politique de l'Equilibre,* 296). An article in the *Fortnightly Review* for April, entitled "Germany and England," caused special

indignation; the writer representing the Kaiser as only "friendly [to England] on the surface, but politically and commercially most hostile," and desirous of an understanding with Russia against us. The writer, who purported to be an Englishman, signed himself *Ignotus*, but was believed by Schiemann to be the Russian writer Wesselitski, who as London correspondent of the *Novya Vremya* was in the habit of sending "poisonous" telegrams and communications to that paper (*ib.* ii. 240 and *Hammann*, 115). Germany was perhaps more needlessly supersensitive to Press attacks than other countries. Baron Holstein, who at that time was chief conductor of German foreign policy, is said to have followed with the greatest interest the attitude of our Press, and to have often become "wildly excited" by statements not only in our leading daily papers but in the most unimportant periodicals (*Eckhardstein*, 132). On the other hand, so violent were many German papers against England that King Albert of Saxony was so concerned at their possible effect on Anglo-German relations that he could often scarcely sleep for thinking of it (*ib.* 142).

Books as well as speeches and articles constitute the fuel which produces the mental atmosphere of the world out of which comes ultimately peace or war; and from this point of view certain books of the time are of historical interest. Many German books gave needless provocation, but all the guilt was not on their side. One of the worst books of this sort was a French book of this year: *L'Europe et la question d'Autriche au seuil du XX Siècle*, by M. André Chéradame, whose theme was Pan-Germanism, and which started a scare that spread a panic through Europe. Confident that Pan-Germanism aimed at the invasion and annexation of Austria by Germany, he scraped together a number of extracts from writings and speeches which might admit of such an interpretation. All countries have their dreamers of territorial expansion, and Germany, of course, had her share of such visionaries. The Pan-German League (*Alldeutscher Verband*), founded in 1895, was a development from the *Allgemeine Deutscher*

Verband, founded in 1886 by Dr. Peters for the promotion of German colonial expansion, and in the intervening years its membership had grown from 5,600, with twenty-seven local groups, to 21,361, with 185 local groups, in April 1900. This was a marked increase, but what were such numbers from a population of 50 millions? Much of the literature on which Chéradame relied was anonymous and correspondingly valueless: like *Ein Deutscher Weltreich* ("*A German World-Kingdom*"), published in 1892 above the signature of three stars; or *Grossdeutschland und Mitteleuropa um das Jahr* 1950 ("*Great Germany and Mid-Europe about the Year* 1950"), by an Alldeutscher, 1895; or *Osterreich's Zusammenbruch* ("*The Break-up of Austria*"), 1899. But the most terrifying of these forecasts of futurity was the terrible *Germania Triumphans*, 1895, which foretold the conquests Germany was to make from 1900 to 1915. In the year 1912 the fleets of Germany, France, and Italy would proceed against the United States, and at the victorious peace Mexico would be allotted to Germany, and Central America to France; then in 1913 the German Kaiser, in reply to a protest from England, would personally lead the combined fleets against her, and, after disembarking and winning a great battle, would enter London in triumph as a preliminary to the conquest of the whole world (232). As such sorry stuff came to be printed and read and discussed in certain journals, the German Government was represented as behind it, because it put no obstacle in the way of exposing such Pan-German nonsense in the bookshop windows! (*ib.* 243).

Of course in this sketch the Kaiser figured as the chief Pan-German of all. Had he not once said that in difficult decisions the pen's only power lay in the support of the sword? Was he not haunted with the idea of connecting Hamburg with Trieste? Whatever he did, aimed at the invasion and annexation of Austria. His new fleet was pointed as much against Austria as against England (*ib.* 263); the new military law of 1899 for increasing the Army, the new fortifications on the French and the Russian frontiers,

were meant, not for war against those countries, but for preventing them from interfering, should the death of the aged Austrian Emperor open the way to the succession of the German Kaiser to his dominions. Yet what step was ever taken during the next fourteen years to fulfil the Chéradame prediction ?

Meantime Lord Kitchener's proclamation of August 7th, that all burghers who had not surrendered by September 15th should be banished permanently from South Africa, had no other result than to make the resistance to our arms fiercer than before. Indignation in neutral countries rose perceptibly higher ; and on October 25th, at Edinburgh, Mr. Chamberlain spoke of the possibility of even severer measures becoming necessary, but adding that, if they were, they could never approach in cruelty to the precedents set by other nations in Poland, in the Caucasus, in Algeria, in Tongking, in Bosnia, or in the Franco-German War of 1870. The remark was a fair hitting round in equal measure at every civilized country, but Germany took the attack as specially aimed at herself, and expressed her wrath unrestrainedly in newspaper articles, in offensive caricatures of the British Army, and in indignation meetings all over the country. The situation was growing dangerous, and Lord Rosebery on December 20th, at Chesterfield, not unfairly rebuked Chamberlain for his Edinburgh speech, by which he added fuel to a flame already sufficiently alight. The Liberal ex-Premier declared that he knew no parallel to the ill-will with which England was regarded almost universally by the people of Europe ; and some of this hostility he attributed to Mr. Chamberlain's oratory, who was apt to forget that what was good enough for home consumption might not be equally palatable to foreign palates. Then on January 8, 1902, Count Bülow, despite advice to the contrary, made a bitter retort to the Edinburgh speech, in which he quoted Frederick the Great's reply to some one who disparaged the German Army, " Let him alone, do not be excited, he is biting on granite," and this rhetorical duel between the two countries put a final end to all idea of

that alliance for which Chamberlain himself had been so desirous earlier in the year.

That the ill-feeling against us roused by the Boer War never found expression in a European coalition to bring the war to an end justifies some surprise; nor, indeed, was the idea of intervention wholly absent. But the Kaiser, in a conversation with the British Ambassador, Sir F. Lascelles, in April 1901, repeatedly assured him of his determination never to be drawn into such intervention (*Eckhardstein*, 164). There was a nefarious game on the part of France and Russia to suggest such intervention to Germany and then, on her refusal to join, to accuse her of having proposed it. The first attempt was in August 1899, when Jules Hansen succeeded in conveying the idea that the German Government had made definite proposals to France for intervention, but that France had indignantly rejected them. When the King, at first alarmed by this report, learnt from Eckhardstein that the refusal to intervene came from Germany he exclaimed, "I have no longer any doubt at all that everything that comes from Petersburg and Paris is only a low intrigue to set England and Germany against one another" (*ib.* 122). In February 1900 Germany again refused a Russian proposal of intervention, and again in October 1901. On this last occasion the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London told our Foreign Office that Germany had made repeated efforts to get Russia and France to intervene on behalf of the Boers, but that all such approaches had been virtuously declined. This was just the reverse of what really happened, and the Duke of Devonshire contemptuously exclaimed, "That is what the Russians call truth!" (*ib.* 165). Nevertheless the legend of a German design to intervene passed into the current belief of the time.

Count Bülow explained why such intervention never came to pass. Highly popular as it would have been in Germany, and certainly as she might have counted on the help of France, such community of interest was only apparent; had Germany gone to war with England, French

policy would have changed. Realizing that what lay nearest to her heart was the recovery of Metz and Strasburg, France would have left Germany in the lurch. There would have been the risk too of England's strangling the young German fleet in its very infancy. To avert that danger by an irremediable quarrel with England imposed neutrality on Germany as the only wise policy to pursue (*Deutsche Politik*, 32–3).

A motive that operates against the termination of any war operated in the case of the Boer War; for there were certain quarters in Germany where its continuance meant a continuance of pecuniary profit. It is a strange rule of International Law that, whilst a nation as a State violates neutrality by supplying one belligerent with munitions of war against another, its nationals may freely do so, subject only to the risk of capture. Thus Baron Richthofen, the German Foreign Minister, openly admitted that private German firms sent the British Government large stores of guns, powder, cartridges, saddles, and provisions against the Boers; and Count Goluchowski, the Austrian Foreign Minister, had to deny that the supply by private individuals to England of arms and horses was a breach of neutrality. A saner law would certainly prohibit the supply of war materials or of assistance of any kind from any source to belligerent States. But, as things were, whilst public foreign opinion might be all on the side of the Boers, private profiteering injured them as much as it could, with sublime indifference to the consequences to the weaker belligerent.

Clearly the relations of the Continental Powers to one another were far too inharmonious to admit of any such co-operation as an armed coalition implied. The great struggle of the time was between France and Germany for the soul of Russia. Bismarck had always laid great stress on Germany's retaining the friendship of Russia as a safeguard against an alliance between France and Russia. For this reason he had effected the Insurance Treaty between Germany and Russia, in virtue of which Germany was to

allow Russia a free hand in Bulgaria and Constantinople in return for Russia's neutrality in any fresh war between Germany and France. But when Caprivi succeeded Bismarck as Chancellor this treaty lapsed, much to the vexation of Bismarck, who thus saw the greatest obstacle removed from that danger of a Franco-Russian coalition against Germany which he deemed it his own greatest merit to have averted. His fears were justified; for shortly afterwards Russia, freed from her German connection, entered into an alliance with France.

The terms of the military convention or treaty made in 1893 and 1894 between Russia and France were to the effect that, if Germany attacked either Power, each should help with all their available power, namely, 1,300,000 men from France and 700,000 to 800,000 men from Russia, so that Germany might be attacked at the same time on both her eastern and her western front; and this treaty was to last as long as the Triple Alliance lasted (Poincaré's *Origines de la Guerre*, 61). But if Germany had thus lost Russia as an ally she might still keep her as a friend, and for this purpose Bismarck was even ready to abandon Austria and the Triple Alliance; a difference of opinion on this point between himself and the young Kaiser Wilhelm II, who was for adhering to the Austrian Alliance, being one of the chief causes of quarrel between them in March 1890 (Hohenlöhe's *Memoirs*, ii. 412). The Kaiser was firm for loyalty to Austria, even at the risk of war with France and Russia (*ib.* 413). A few years later, when Count Bülow succeeded to Prince Hohenlöhe as Chancellor, the Russian friendship was still cultivated, and with so much success that, owing to the unwillingness of Russian statesmen to be entangled in France's policy of revenge, and to the disappointment of France at the long-deferred hopes of active aid from Russia, French diplomacy turned to the idea of an *entente* with England as more likely to produce fruit for her aspirations (Bülow, *Deutsche Politik*, 84). By frequent correspondence and by the interchange of personal visits between the Kaiser and the Czar it was sought success-

fully to prevent Russia from committing herself too deeply to the cause of France.

Thus the personal element came to play an ever larger part in foreign affairs, and the meetings of monarchs and their Ministers to have increasing significance. But nothing dispelled the growing unpopularity of Germany amongst her neighbours. And a special grievance against her arose in Russia and Austria in connection with her attempt to Germanize Prussian Poland by making the teaching of German compulsory in the Polish schools. Polish children boldly struck against saying their religious lessons in unintelligible German; and at one place some twenty of these rebellious young patriots were flogged by order of the school inspector, much to the wrath of their parents, of whom one confidently asserted that Christ had spoken in the Polish, not in the German, language. But the indignation was more than local, and even affected political relations. The Poles in Russia and Austria began to boycott German goods, whilst in Russia the German arms were pulled down and trampled on before the German Consulates of Warsaw and Moscow. And when Germany made new tariff proposals for raising her import duties, Austria and Italy and Russia alike threatened retaliatory measures if the law passed, causing the Triple Alliance to weaken. On October 17th the Austrian Prime Minister caused a flutter by alluding to the proposed tariff as endangering the alliance with Germany, and Count Goluchowski had to defend the alliance against attack by claiming a higher importance for political than for commercial considerations.

Such was the state of the European political chessboard in the first year of King Edward's reign. Nor did it need exceptional gifts of prophecy to foresee the dangers to the peace of the world that threatened from the dark clouds visible on the horizon.

CHAPTER II

1902

THE BELATED PEACE WITH THE BOERS

At the beginning of the new year it seemed less likely that the South African War would end than that a German war would be added to it. Even at home there was, especially from the Liberal Party, much hostile criticism of a war which was rendered none the less horrible for being designated as only "guerilla" warfare. Campbell-Bannerman denounced the whole devastation policy as a "gigantic political blunder"; Mr. Lloyd George condemned it as "an unrighteous war"; whilst the supporters of Mr. Labouchere were legion who called it "a war of conquest carried on in a barbarous manner."

But, strong as such expressions were, the cooler view that comes with lapse of time can hardly fail to coincide with the earlier judgment. The custom of taking the Boer women prisoners seemed to General Louis Botha a thing so "outside the usual methods of warfare" that he hoped it would lead to some foreign intervention (De Wet, *Three Years' War*, 426). The sufferings of the women and children were indeed the outstanding feature of this miserable war. "Words fail me," wrote the Rev. J. D. Kestell, minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Harrismith and chaplain to De Wet and President Steyn, "when I endeavour to speak of the women and of what they had to endure" (*Through Shot and Flame*, 341). "They had been ill-treated, insulted . . . they had drunk of the cup to its last bitter drops" (*ib.* 247, 340). "The Boer women were shamefully treated," wrote De Wet (287); who also declared that "laagers containing no one but women and

children and decrepit old men were fired upon with cannon and rifles in order to compel them to stop" (242–3). The concentration camps may have been managed with the utmost humanity, but at the end of the war Botha asserted that in the last year "more than 20,000 women and children had died in the camps" (*De Wet*, 427). Latterly even the mercy of the camps was denied them. "So far from the truth was it," says Kestell, "that the English had removed our wives to the concentration camps from charitable motives, that during the last six months they had refused to receive them when, driven by want, they had sought refuge in the camps" (331). And the same fact was stated by Birkenstock at Vereeniging on May 16, 1902 (*De Wet*, 412).

Such was the picture as presented to the neutral world, nor did the injury to women and children complete the picture. The injury to property rivalled the injury to persons; and the theory quite broke down that in modern war any respect at all is paid to private property. De Wet took to blowing up trains with dynamite; not without regret, he said, but with the sanction of the laws of war. "It was terrible," he wrote, "to take human lives in such a manner; still, however fearful, it was not contrary to the rules of civilized warfare, and we were certainly within our rights in obstructing the enemy's lines of communication in this manner" (305). Lord Roberts in consequence proclaimed that any building was to be burnt that stood within ten miles of a destroyed railway; but such burning soon came to be carried out "not only within the specified radius, but also everywhere throughout the State (the Transvaal). Everywhere houses were burnt down or destroyed with dynamite. And, worse still, the furniture itself and the grain were burnt, and the sheep, cattle, and horses were carried off. Nor was it long before horses were shot down in heaps, and the sheep killed by thousands by the Kaffirs and the National Scouts (Boers who joined the English), or run through by the troops with their bayonets. The devastation became worse from day to day" (*De Wet*, 242). Kestell writes of sheep "done to death in heaps of tens of

thousands" (340). "Large flocks of sheep were collected everywhere and stabbed to death at different centres, in heaps of thousands upon thousands. In the town of Vrede there was a great slaughter, and, in order to make it impossible for our people to live there, the dead sheep were carried into the houses and left to rot"; and this not only in the Vrede and Harrismith districts, but everywhere throughout the State (185). Large herds of young or useless horses were driven into kraals or into ditches, and shot by ten, fifty, or a hundred, so that the very air became tainted (186). "Food was destroyed wholesale. Tens of thousands of tons of wheat and maize were destroyed or rendered unfit for consumption" (*ib.* 207); "all the food of the women was carried away or scattered on the ground," save where some humane officer or soldier secretly left a dish of flour for the housewife (*ib.* 223); the mills were everywhere destroyed (*ib.* 206). Even sacred buildings did not always enjoy the immunity often accorded to them in pre-Christian times; the churches of Frankfort, Ventersburg, and Lindley were burnt down (*ib.* 241), De Wet writing of the latter: "Alas, it could not any more be called a town. Every house was burnt down; not even the church and parsonage were spared" (333).

Happily this kind of war was not unrelieved by instances of a different sort; as in the case of Parys, about whom Kestell writes that no complaints were made of officers or men who were quartered there for some time, and that the families there declared that "the English treated them with the greatest consideration and had also provided them with all their wants" (265). But cases of this sort made less impression than tales of a contrary nature. And if these latter elicited bitter complaints even at home, it was not astonishing that their effect was worse abroad. Especially was this the case in Germany, where sympathy with the weaker belligerent caused much discontent with the Government's attitude of a passive neutrality, and where speeches, meetings, and resolutions all over Germany manifested a strong disposition to intervention. The horrors of

war are often intensified in the telling, nor is it possible to distinguish between real and invented cruelties. But one may be sure that the tales which reached the neutral world lost nothing on their way that was calculated to enhance the indignation natural to their recital. In any case it is beyond doubt that the bitterness of the German Press contributed more than anything to that estrangement between England and Germany that culminated in the war of 1914. It was admitted by Professor Schiemann that in this Press campaign rudenesses occurred which "we in nowise dispute and keenly regret," though he contended that worse attacks were made in the French or Russian Press than in the German (iv. 318). Chancellor Bülow also frequently deprecated the violent tone of the German Press; but it was of no avail, and the historical fact remains that the German War of 1914 was a direct consequence of the Boer War, in so far as the ill-feeling engendered by the one laid inevitably the train for the other.

Mr. Chamberlain's speech on October 25, 1901, had greatly intensified the hostility of Germany, and on January 8th and January 10th Count Bülow felt himself under the necessity of replying to the charges of German cruelty in the Franco-German War of 1870. The Chancellor's remarks added to the embitterment of England, though our Colonial Secretary had been the first to give offence. A Minister, said the Count, in defence of his policy, would do well to leave foreign countries alone, or use the greatest prudence in adducing foreign precedents; otherwise there was danger of his being misunderstood or of his involuntarily hurting foreign feelings, which was all the more regrettable in reference to a country which had always been on good and friendly terms with his own, and to whose interest as well as to Germany's the untroubled continuance of such terms conduced. It was quite intelligible that, in a people so intimately united with its glorious Army as the German people was, the general feeling had rebelled against the attempt to defame the heroic character and the moral basis of the national battles for unity; but the German Army

stood far too high and its scutcheon was too pure to admit of its being affected by these warped judgments (*Reden*, i. 242). But two days later (January 10th) the Chancellor had to express his deep regret at the grossly insulting language in which the deputy Von Sonnenberg had referred to Mr. Chamberlain and the British Army: "If we are sensitive of every attack on the honour of our own army, we must also refrain from insulting foreign armies, which also contain people who know how to die" (*ib.* i. 246). The right to repel an attack on the German Army afforded no pretext for establishing hostile relations between England and Germany; the only rule for foreign policy was to follow the line of national interest, and this demanded the cultivation of peaceable and friendly relations with England.

But it rested with Herr Bebel, the distinguished Socialist leader, to take the line of the soundest common sense. He declined to join in the outcry against Mr. Chamberlain; for he was sure that deeds of violence had been committed in the Franco-German War, just as they were in every war. The doctrine current in all countries that all is fair in war tends in practice to be the denial of *all* laws of war in restraint of its exercise. The saying that "War is war" is the gloss for every iniquity. Count Bülow himself had to defend against Bebel and others the actions of the German soldiers in China. He hotly denied that a single German soldier had acted there contrary to the good repute of the German Army and people; in all great collections of men there were some coarse and cruel natures, but it was unfair to generalize from single cases; "the German soldier was in discipline and humanity unsurpassed by any other soldier of the world" (*Reden*, i. 154, November 23, 1900). Again on January 11, 1902, he affirmed, with regard to excesses alleged against his countrymen in China, that it was beyond doubt that everything said in the Press about the cruelties of the German troops was either gross exaggeration or sheer invention (*ib.* i. 251); and by this argument every war may be proved to have been fought as gently as a game of football.

In the General Election that took place this year for the House of Representatives in the United States this question of cruelty in war played a large part. The Democrats laid great stress on the atrocities alleged against the American soldiers in the Philippines. Resort had been made to the Spanish torture of the " water cure " to obtain information, the victim's mouth being kept open by a wedge, and water poured down his throat. The defence was that it was in reprisals for the barbarous murders of American soldiers. But the case of General Jacob Smith was a damning one. Being in command of Samar, he directed Major Waller, who was in command of an expeditionary corps, to make of Samar a howling wilderness, and to spare neither man nor woman nor any child over ten years of age. A court-martial acquitted Waller on the ground of his duty to superior orders ; whereupon President Roosevelt had Smith tried for cruelty by a court-martial held at Manilla, and on the jury finding him guilty reprimanded him and placed him on the retired list. The Democrats took this as vindicating their charges, but it failed to influence the electorate (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 426).

Mr. Chamberlain replied on January 11, 1902, to the Chancellor's speech of January 8th, but not in the voice of a dove : he withdrew nothing, he qualified nothing, he defended nothing ; he would refrain from giving lessons to a Foreign Minister, but at the same time he would take none at his hands ; he was responsible only to his own Sovereign and to his own countrymen. So the sting of the charge remained. But his speech was received with the greatest enthusiasm both at Birmingham and in the country generally. The City of London went so far as to resolve on presenting the popular statesman with an address in a golden casket. But the evasion of an apology was not incompatible with a withdrawal. For the end of the incident was an unofficial conversation between Lord Lansdowne and the German Ambassador, in which his Lordship pointed out that no specific charge of military barbarity had been made against the Germans or any other

country. And as a war with England was the last thing the Chancellor desired, the needless quarrel went no further.

To smooth the ruffled waters was probably the motive of the Kaisers' sending King Edward a letter to invite the Prince of Wales to Berlin. The Prince, reaching Berlin on January 26th, was received with every sign of welcome, and a better feeling was shown in the Reichstag, where Baron von Richthofen, the Foreign Minister, begged the Pan-Germans not to forget their kinsmanship with the English, and cited the evidence from a German officer of the humanity shown by the British to their Boer prisoners in a camp in Ceylon.

But for the credit of our Imperialism it was sought, not merely to rebut the charges of inhumanity in respect of the farm-burnings and concentration camps, but to emphasize the humanity of the war as its most striking feature. When the King opened Parliament on January 16th, his speech gave it forth to the world that his army had conducted a tedious campaign "with a humanity, even to their own detriment, in the treatment of the enemy, which was deserving of the highest praise." On June 4th Mr. Balfour, who succeeded his uncle, Lord Salisbury, as Prime Minister a few days later, in supporting a vote of thanks to the Army for their services, spoke of the "exceptional humanity" shown by the troops. And at the end Lord Kitchener, addressing the troops before his return from South Africa, laid stress on his "special pleasure in congratulating the Army on the kindly and humane spirit by which all ranks had been animated during this long struggle"; nor could any misrepresentations from outside prevail in the long run against the fact that "no war had ever been waged in which the combatants and non-combatants on either side had shown so much consideration and kindness to one another"; which, of course, was the best thing he could say. And when the German General Count Waldersee came over to the Coronation in August as one of the German Mission, at a dinner given in his honour by Lord Roberts, the Count, by laying special stress

on the great humanity shown by the British troops and authorities to the Boer population, did much to mitigate the irritation caused by the attacks in Germany on the British Army (*Eckhardstein*, 232). But how bad an effect such attacks had on the King is shown by a conversation he had with Eckhardstein on February 8, 1902. He could, said the King, no longer give much weight to the long letters he received from the Kaiser assuring him of his friendship for England; for the renewed abuse in the German Press and the sarcastic remarks of Count Bülow in the Reichstag had aroused such resentment among his Ministers and in the public that there could be no more question of Germany and England co-operating in any conceivable matter. Yet the King, in March and April of 1901, had been decidedly in favour of the participation of Germany in an Anglo-Japanese agreement (*ib.* 230).

But in the early months of the year, when the war looked interminable, and Lord Kitchener's proclamation of August 7, 1901, threatening life-banishment from South Africa on all burghers who had not surrendered by September 15, 1901, had had only an infinitesimal effect (*Kestell*, 208–9), or "no effect whatever" (*De Wet*, 309), there was great confusion between English parties as to the best policy to pursue. Sir Alfred Milner, at Johannesburg in January, expressed a very prevalent view when he said, "No use to threaten, no use to wheedle; the only thing is imperturbably to squeeze." Campbell-Bannerman and many Liberals, differing from these ideas of statecraft, condemned this insistence on unconditional surrender, and favoured a peace by negotiation rather than one following subjugation; but as many, including Sir Henry himself, regarded the independence of the Boers as irretrievably forfeited, there was reason in Mr. Balfour's contention that, as the Boers were fighting to retain their independence and we to rob them of it, there could be no peace that fell short of their subjugation. Lord Salisbury, in his reply of March 11, 1900, to the letter of the Boer Presidents of March 9, 1900, had insisted on the loss of their independence

as a punishment for their having begun the war, ignoring the admitted previous "considerable preparations for war" on our side; and this remained not only the Government's view, but that of the Liberal Imperialists (Lord Rosebery, Sir E. Grey, Mr. Asquith, and others), between whom and the Unionist Government Mr. Chamberlain fairly claimed that the difference had become imperceptible. Happily there was a Liberal remnant, which from the traditional sympathy of Liberals with a people fighting for their freedom was opposed to carrying on the war to extremities, and held that the withdrawal of the banishment proclamation of August 7, 1901, might dispose the enemy to overtures of peace. But opinions of this sort counted for nothing, and were defeated in Parliament by immense majorities.

Thus the rift between the two wings of the Liberal Party grew ever wider, till it developed into a breach which has never since been really healed. Campbell-Bannerman, in reply to Lord Rosebery's denunciation of an independent Irish Parliament, denied that the Liberals had ever demanded or contemplated such a thing; whereupon Lord Rosebery, on February 21st, declared in *The Times* that with such discordant views about Ireland, as well as about the war and its methods, the moment of "definite separation" had come. But a few days later (February 27th) his followers refused to sever themselves from the main Liberal Party, and on March 3rd the Liberal Imperial League of 1901 was dissolved, and its place taken by the Liberal League, with Rosebery as its president. Mr. Asquith's letter on March 3rd to his East Fife constituents revealed the extent of the lapse from the Liberal faith. Gladstone's Irish policy, he said, had failed because its aim of reconciling Ireland to England had lacked the sanction and sympathy of British opinion. To recognize such a fact was not apostasy, but common sense; therefore he was against the bringing in of a Home Rule Bill, should the Liberal Party be returned to power. As if the duty of statesmanship was to follow, not to lead, public opinion in the way it should go; and as if reform of any sort might not have to wait

for ever if the sanction of public opinion were a condition precedent!

Peace in Africa seemed past praying for, when suddenly help came from an unexpected quarter. In the debate on the Address, Lord Rosebery on January 16th received a negative answer to his question whether overtures for peace had not lately been received from the exiled Boer Government, and suggested that the recent visit of the Dutch Premier, Baron de Kuyper, had been for some other object than merely to see the pictures by the old masters. Lord Rosebery's surmise was not far wrong. On January 25th Lord Lansdowne did receive from the Dutch Ambassador in London, Baron Gericke, the offer of the good offices of the Queen of the Netherlands to facilitate the opening of negotiations, and the proposal of safe-conducts to be granted to the Boer delegates to go to South Africa and back with full powers to conclude a treaty of peace. Lord Lansdowne's reply on January 29th was a refusal to accept the intervention of any foreign Power, and an intimation that peace could only be made in Africa by direct negotiations between Lord Kitchener and the Boer leaders. Lord Salisbury on February 5th declared his inability to imagine the purpose of the Dutch Government, and suggested that they had been prompted to this step by the pro-Boers in England (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 51). Though this did not promise well for a settlement, the correspondence, published in a Blue Book on February 4th, and sent to the Boer Generals in the field by Lord Kitchener on March 4th, was the starting-point of the difficult peace that was subsequently made.

But not before the Boers had won a great success at Tweebosch on March 7th, when a force of 1,200 men, under Lord Methuen, and five guns had been captured, and Lord Methuen himself wounded and taken prisoner. There were about 200 British casualties. General Delarey showed Lord Methuen every attention, and sent him to Klerksdorp for treatment by an English physician, but it appears that Lord Methuen was set at liberty on the way, to the annoyance of some of the Boers, who thought he should have

been kept as a prisoner (*Kestell*, 268–9). When the telegram announcing this disaster was read in the House, the cheers and laughter of some Irish Nationalists roused such indignation that on March 13th it was announced that the King had renounced his intention of visiting Ireland in the course of the year, a whole nation being thus punished for the misdemeanour of a few.

A contemporary writer asserted that "the most salient characteristic of the foreign policy of Germany in the year 1902 was its antagonism to England" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 298); but he immediately went on to say that this antagonism came chiefly from the Pan-Germans, a party which, though very noisy and active, had "few followers in the Prussian and German Parliaments," and which was strongly opposed by German Liberals and by the rapidly growing party of the Social Democrats. "Such a party could not have much influence with the Government." Count Bülow, the Chancellor, never ceased to dissociate himself from the Pan-Germans, and to insist on the necessity for friendly relations with England.

This was most fortunate; for China and the Far East afforded abundant chances for a war between the six Powers that had been exacting punishment from China for the Boxer rising and the murder of Europeans, including that of the German Ambassador, Von Ketteler, whose assassin had been executed at Peking on the last day of 1900. The real preoccupation of the Powers was competition for the trade of China, and the peaceable adjustment of this competition demanded a spirit of tact and compromise. This was shown in the treaty of October 16, 1900, between England and Germany, which stipulated for the freedom of trade for all nations in China; for the abstention of both countries from all territorial acquisitions; and for the maintenance of the territorial *status quo*. The two Powers were to agree together for the protection of their own territory in the event of any third Power trying to acquire territory, and the other Powers were to be invited to conform to the same principles. Any ideas of Germany's

consenting to the dismemberment or breaking up of China were emphatically disclaimed by the Chancellor on November 19, 1900 (*Reden*, i. 132). The treaty was a hint of "hands off" to Russia; notwithstanding which in 1901 China was on the point of agreeing to let Russia occupy Manchuria for three years, involving a monopoly over the railways, mines, and commerce of Manchuria. Protests from England and Japan in January 1902, and from the United States in February, put an end to this agreement, though Russian control of Manchuria continued (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 382). As a further security against Russia, England and Japan made a treaty on January 30, 1902, to safeguard their respective interests in China and Korea against foreign threats. Each Power disclaimed all aggressive tendencies, and agreed to remain neutral in case of either being involved in war, but to help its ally against a combination of enemies. Japan, it was felt, could defend herself against any one Power, but might need assistance against more. Germany's view about this treaty, as expressed by the Chancellor on March 3, 1902, was that it did not touch Germany nor the agreement of October 16, 1900. Germany's interests in China were exclusively commercial; she had no territorial aims either in China or Korea (*Reden*, i. 297). All that Germany wanted was equal conditions of trade in the Far East for all nations, without privileges for any.

This Anglo-Japanese Treaty of January 30, 1902, had been in course of negotiation since August 4, 1901, and had taken long in the making, the strange thing being that concurrently with negotiations between England and Japan the Japanese Government was engaged since September 1901 in similar negotiations with Russia. There was therefore no small resentment in Russia when the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was published on February 11th in London and on February 12th in Tokio: as Count Hayashi says, Russia's "dislike of Japan deepened more and more" (*Secret Memoirs*, 199). And another fact is noteworthy: that it was for long discussed between Count Hayashi, Japan's ambassador in London, and Lord Lansdowne, our

Foreign Minister, whether Germany should be invited to join the alliance either before or after the treaty was effected. After much shilly-shallying, it was decided that the German Ambassadors in London and Tokio should be notified of the treaty on February 3rd, but on the evening of February 2nd an attempt was unfortunately made to postpone the notification, in consequence of "some wish expressed by King Edward" (*ib.* 190). It seems likely that the bitter feelings aroused by the oratorical combat between Count Bülow and Mr. Chamberlain put an end to all thought of inviting Germany to join our alliance with Japan, and there is evidence that Germany regarded herself as deliberately excluded by the two Governments from participating in the treaty, and nursed much displeasure thereat (*ib.* 202).

In any case Count Bülow, by his attitude of indifference, on March 3rd did what he could to soothe the nerves of European diplomacy, as also by his persistent explanation of the real and proper meaning of that much-dreaded word *Weltpolitik*. This word, he declared, did not mean that Germany was to put her finger into every pie, or to play the part of Don Quixote, to put her lance in rest, and run amuck, wherever she saw an English windmill; it only meant that, as her commerce had been driven to expand itself over the whole world, it behoved her to recognize that German policy was no longer limited to the home and the parish but was of world extension, and that it was incumbent on her to protect and promote those wider interests within the limits of the reasonable and the possible (*Reden*, i. 167, 300). Germany's *Weltpolitik* was entirely defensive, for the security of her transmarine trade; and on that account England had not the same reason for jealousy of her maritime development that she had formerly in the case of Spain, France, Holland, or Russia, all of whom had aspired to the maritime supremacy of the world (*Deutsche Politik*, 28–9). On December 6, 1897, he had summed up Germany's justification for her new and greater fleet in a phrase that had been used by Pascal

(Hammann's *Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges*, 70), and that soon became proverbial: "We wish to put no one in the shade, but we also demand our place in the sun" (*Reden*, i. 8). Again, on March 15, 1901, it was in the sense that the development of Germany's overseas interests in East Asia was a question of life or death to Germany that she claimed her "place in the sun," and desired not to be pushed into the shade (*ib.* i. 210). The Kaiser followed his Chancellor in speaking of this "place in the sun" on June 19, 1901 (*Kaiserreden*, 349). The popular idea that a place in the sun meant the only place in the sun, or in other words the dominion of the whole world, arose from a misunderstanding of the German words *Weltpolitik* and *Weltmacht*, neither of which had the meaning of *Weltherrschaft* which was usually applied to them in England, the meaning of world-supremacy or universal dominion.

The moderate tone of the German Chancellor about China had by March caused a brightening of the sky, which was increased on March 24th by the news of the opening of negotiations for peace in South Africa. Despite the ovation with which the Boer Generals had been acclaimed in Berlin on October 16, 1901, the refusal of the Kaiser to receive them except in the presence of the British Ambassador, coupled with the reception of the Boer delegates by President Roosevelt on March 5, 1902, and his refusal of any American intervention, rendered the Boer cause hopeless. And on our side, too, peace had come to be recognized as desirable. The concentration camps alone were costing the country £180,000 a month, and the music-halls could no longer sustain the original war-fever. The war and the Chinese expedition had cost the country in the last three years more than 165 millions. On the same day that news of a forthcoming peace reached England (March 24th) Mr. Balfour introduced his Education Bill, which till its tardy passing at the end of the year diverted to the most controversial of all domestic subjects the rage of party spirit that had been evoked by the war. And on March 26th died Cecil Rhodes, the leading spirit of the Imperialist

policy which had begun with the Jameson raid in 1896 and was to end shortly after his death with the crushing of the ill-fated Republics that had dared to oppose him. His contribution to the philosophy of Imperialism was summed up in the phrase "Territory is everything."

The peace was long in the making, the sacrifice of their national independence being the one thing the Boers were reluctant to yield and the one thing their conquerors demanded. In vain the Boers tried for a compromise; they would submit to an English protectorate; to a surrender of the goldfields and of Swaziland; they would lay no claim to an independent foreign policy. But the meeting that began at Vereeniging on May 15th only revealed the hopelessness of continuing the struggle. All hope of foreign intervention had vanished, and the expectation, maintained to the last, of a general rising in Cape Colony had been dispelled by a recent visit of General Smuts. General De Wet, in his wish to continue the war, was in a hopeless minority. Between May 19th and May 28th there were long discussions between the Boer leaders on the one side and Lords Milner and Kitchener on the other, of which there is a full report in De Wet's book (436–71), but which did not perceptibly affect the result. An immense territory was added to the British Empire, so far fulfilling the prediction expressed by Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham on May 16th that the future of the world lay with great empires, not with small states: a reading of history which derived little justification from the experience of the past.

Thus came the Boer War to a tardy end: a war for which all the responsibility did not rest with the British Government. For, as Vice-President Burger said on May 30, 1902, "We began this war strong in the faith of God, but there were also one or two other things to rely on. We had considerable confidence in our own weapons; we underestimated the enemy; the fighting spirit had seized upon our people; and the thought of victory had banished that of the possibility of defeat" (*De Wet*, 500). And that is the history of the origin of most wars.

News of the signature of peace reached England on June 1st and was a good beginning of the summer. The King's part in it was generally recognized; as by Count Reventlow, who speaks of the speedy (!) conclusion of peace as having been actively striven for by him from his accession (203), or by Professor Schiemann, who wrote on June 4th: "No doubt but that a great service in the final agreement of peace belongs to King Edward VII. He had done more for it than any other Englishman, and the obstacles he had to overcome were certainly not slight" (ii. 224). The smoothness and ease with which good relations were established with the new colonies proved how needless had been the prolongation of the struggle. Lord Kitchener received a grant of £50,000 for his exertions, and Lord Salisbury resigned the fatigues of the Premiership on June 11th. The King's serious illness compelled the postponement of his coronation till August 9th, when it was celebrated with more than mediæval magnificence. On August 17th he and the Queen received the Boer Generals, Botha, Delarey, and De Wet, on the *Victoria and Albert* yacht. They had been met at Southampton by Lord Kitchener and by him been presented to Lord Roberts and Mr. Chamberlain on August 16th; but, though they declined to witness the naval review, nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which the London crowds endeavoured to reconcile them to the bitterness of defeat.

But the end did not come with these marks of reconciliation. After a short visit to the Continent and interviews with Kruger and Steyn, the Generals reopened with Mr. Chamberlain the terms of the treaty. It had been agreed to pay 3 millions for the restoration of the destroyed farms, etc., but they claimed that this was inadequate. They wanted compensation for the losses that had been incurred by the use, removal, burning or destruction of all the private property of the inhabitants of the late Republics (August 23rd). Some 30,000 of their houses had been burnt or destroyed, their orchards had been cut down, and

all their farm equipments had been removed or destroyed (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 207). They also pleaded for an amnesty for the Cape and Natal rebels who had fought on their side, and regretted that such an amnesty had not been granted at the Coronation. Chamberlain replied that history recorded no instance of such generosity by a conqueror to the conquered as had been shown by England, and refused to reopen the question. And although at a Conference at the Foreign Office on September 5th between himself, Lord Kitchener, and the Generals, Mr. Chamberlain manifested the same conciliatory spirit that marked his correspondence with them, they proceeded to tour the Continent for an appeal for more money. Finally, Parliament on November 8th voted, in addition to the 3 millions of free grants, 3 millions as a supplementary loan and 2 millions to individuals for their losses. Victorious Imperialism did not fail in generosity; and, in the interests of a wider pacification than could be obtained by money, Mr. Chamberlain himself decided to go to South Africa. He reached Durban on December 26th, and in a series of conciliatory speeches during the winter succeeded better than might have been anticipated in reconciling the racial feud between English and Dutch, and in getting them to work together for their common welfare. The hopes of a greater activity in the goldmines as a sequel or consequence of the war were doomed to disappointment, and the prices of mining shares were lower at the end of the year than they had been at the beginning. But how little it was thought that the end of the Boer War was to herald in a reign of peace is shown by the fact that our naval estimates for this year were a million more than in the previous year. Our Navy, which had cost only 14 millions in 1893, now cost 33 millions; we enjoyed the security afforded by a nearly four-Power standard; for Germany, France, Russia, and Italy put together only spent on their collective Navies four millions more than we did. Yet a spirit of trembling apprehension was sedulously cultivated.

The growing friction with Germany was momentarily

lessened by the visit of the Prince of Wales to Berlin for the Kaiser's forty-third birthday on January 27th. The Prince was received with every honour, and the occasion was thought in Germany to augur well for the world's peace. It proved, wrote Professor Schiemann, that the baiting of Germany by a certain journalistic clique might consider itself wrecked; there was an end of the attempts to make a breach between England and Germany (ii. 40–1). But this was a hope of very short duration. For a violent anti-German propaganda soon again became the feature of a large section of the English and foreign Press. And in the genesis of the subsequent war this Press campaign well deserved the notice which the Professor gave to it. On June 18, 1902, he again complained of an organized international journalistic clique or consortium which, with its centre in London, and with ramifications over the Continent, busied itself with throwing the worst light it could on everything that was said or done in Germany. Through special correspondents in the different capitals of the world it is possible to foist any international policy on public opinion, and in the Professor's opinion this was deliberately done. At the same time, in this fierce Press-war that was the prelude to the real one it was a case where reciprocity ruled, and it was doubtless natural that a German writer had a keener eye for English diatribes against Germany than for those of the German Press against ourselves. But it must not be supposed for that reason that the German Press took no part in the quarrel.

The leading part in this Press crusade was played by *The Times*, which had for its special correspondent at Berlin a Mr. Saunders. This gentleman's animosity against Germany was so unconcealed that in June of this year the German Foreign Minister, Baron Richthofen, remonstrated with him before a number of hearers. "No one," said the Minister, "has contributed more to the poisoning of public opinion in England against Germany then yourself. I have repeatedly told the Ambassador that with the influence of *The Times* in England, and with the repe-

tition of its observations in Germany, your tendentious, poisonous reports must be regarded as a positive mischief for both countries" (*ib.* ii. 240, iii. 103, iv. 314). But neither was Mr. Saunders recalled nor was the agitation checked, for on June 8, 1908, Baron Greindl, the Belgian Minister at Berlin, wrote to M. Davignon, Belgian Foreign Minister, in reference to the inflammatory writing of our Press: "It is not only the cheap papers which stoop to play this part; *The Times* has carried on for many years a campaign of slander and falsehood. Its Berlin correspondent . . . stirs up the hatred of the English against the Germans by attributing to the Imperial Government ambitious plans of which the absurdity is evident, and by accusing it of shady intrigues of which it has never dreamt" (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 32).

Next in importance to *The Times* in this anti-German campaign came the *Fortnightly Review*, where a supposed Englishman wrote under the pseudonym of *Ignotus*. Professor Schiemann wavers as to the personality of *Ignotus*, sometimes identifying him with a Russian writer named Wesselitsky (ii. 240), sometimes with a Frenchman named Neton, once a secretary of M. Delcassé's, who, under the title of *Ignotus*, promoted Delcassian ideas in the *Figaro* (*ib.* v. 215, viii. 201). The pseudonym of *Calchas* concealed the authority of another anti-German writer in the *Fortnightly*, whom rightly or not the Professor identified with Mr. Garvin, editor of the *Observer* (viii. 127); and the same spirit, if not the same pen, inspired the articles which appeared in the *National Review* above the signature of *Quirinus* and of *Ultor*. A Russian named Tatitschef, an ex-diplomat, as London correspondent of the *Novya Vremya*, is said to have written as *Argus*, in the interests of an Anglo-French-Russian league against Germany. As the Russian paper was run by a French syndicate (*ein franzosisches Aktien-unternehmen*), it was a ready vehicle for French propaganda (*ib.* ii. 114). So far, indeed, was this campaign carried, that the Professor on October 3rd complained of it as working directly for a future war between England and

Germany (*ib.* ii. 324), nor was it easily explicable on any other hypothesis. The Kaiser's visit to Sandringham was approaching, and there was great dread of any sort of understanding with Germany. "It is unthinkable," wrote the *National Review*, "that there can be any risk of patriotic British statesmen so far forgetting their duties as to contemplate a *rapprochement* with Germany. . . . We earnestly hope that the leading English newspapers . . . will protest before it is too late against the arrangements by which we are threatened." In this way it was sought to force opinion into a definite groove, and anti-Germanism was made a test of patriotism. This unrelenting attitude had begun in the first year of the new reign in 1901 (*ib.* iv. 123), and continued during the whole of it; nor was it to any purpose that the German *National Zeitung* on November 12th gave the wise advice to the Press of both countries to keep quiet and say nothing, in the interests of harmony (*ib.* ii. 372). About the end of the year *The Times* welcomed a poem from Rudyard Kipling, of which Schiemann said that, with poet Austin's effusions fresh in his memory, he remembered nothing in English political poetry worse in form than this effusion of poet Kipling. But he was not astonished at *The Times* opening its columns to sentiments so thoroughly in accordance with its own (*ib.* ii. 443, December 13th).

With regard to our Navy, it was rightly felt that the time had come when the colonial dependencies of the Empire, whose conceivable naval defence necessitated a large part of our vast expenditure, should help to ease their mother country of some fraction of the financial burden. With this question the Imperial Council with the Colonial Premiers was mainly occupied in meetings that lasted from June 30th to August 11th. But not even in return for a suggested share in the Councils of the Empire were the Premiers disposed to promise any definite contribution to Imperial defence, though Australia and New Zealand, by agreeing to raise their previously insignificant contributions, and Natal and Newfoundland by agreeing to

contribute a few thousands, practically doubled the amount hitherto paid by the Colonies.

Meantime the Triple Alliance, of which the foundation had been laid in 1879 by Prince Bismarck and Count Andrassy, came up for renewal, and there was much hope among Germany's enemies that the treaty might not be renewed. The German Chancellor insisted that both in design and in result the alliance was pacific and not aggressive; that it laid so little burden on its members as to bind none of the three to any specific amount of military force, and left each member so unfettered in its dealings with other Powers as to remain unaffected by any agreements that Italy might make separately with France about the Mediterranean (January 8, 1902. *Reden*, i. 243). The Chancellor had some long interviews in the spring with Signor Prinetti, the Italian Foreign Minister, at Venice; the German new protective tariff vexed both Italy and Austria; but the treaty was renewed at Berlin on June 28th for twelve years. The Chancellor regarded it no longer as "an absolute necessity," but as an additional guarantee of European peace.

The competition of the Powers for the Czar's favour continued to be brisk, though Russia was in her normal condition of revolutionary rumblings. Lest French adoration for Russia should seem to be cooling, President Loubet visited St. Petersburg on May 23rd, and it pleased English observers to note that the "cordiality" of his reception was "in strong contrast to the frigidity of the comments of the Russian Press on the visit of the Emperor William" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 323).

On July 9th King Victor Emmanuel started for St. Petersburg on the first visit ever paid by an Italian Sovereign to a Czar of Russia, and from August 27th to 31st he was the guest of the Kaiser in Germany. And in the meantime, on August 6th, the Kaiser and the Czar had met at Reval: a return visit for the reception of the Czar by the Kaiser off Danzig in 1901 and "the merry hours" there spent together (*Letter* 24, January 3, 1902).

On September 2nd the Kaiser expressed to the Czar his gratitude for the visit: for the kindness shown to him by his cousin, for their long hours of friendly intercourse, for the fine military display, for the target practice of the Russian Fleet; above all for the permission to be shown the secrets of the Russian School of Naval Gunnery: a mark of confidence reciprocated by the secret plans of his newest German ships being handed over to the Czar and his naval authorities. For both of them had the same interest in developing their Navies, which were really to be looked on as *one* great organization belonging to *one* great continent, for the peace of the world. So long as the two leading Powers of the Continent could bring their allies into line—that is, five Powers in all—and decide that peace must be kept, the world must remain at peace and enjoy its blessings. And this was best done by the annual meetings of the two leaders of the two alliances for an exchange of views. This was the more necessary as the restlessness of Japan indicated the danger of that Yellow Peril he had depicted years ago and been laughed at for doing so by most people (*Letter* 26, September 2, 1902).

Evidently at that time the Kaiser's idea was the isolation of England against a combination of Germany, Austria, Italy, France, and Russia, corresponding to our idea of a similar isolation of Germany. The Powers of Europe are like flies sporting in a sunbeam, uniting or separating from moment to moment, without any discernible law for their quickly changing attachments or repulsions. But there can have been no lack of subjects for political discussions at Reval, and the more Russia and Germany drew together, the more did France cool towards Russia and draw towards England. By her convention of April 8th with China, Russia had agreed to restore Manchuria to China, but under conditions that left Russia in real occupation and enabled her to place German and British traders at a disadvantage. And in Persia, too, there was the same scramble for commerce and influence, Russia arranging a new commercial treaty with Persia to her own advantage. The

visit of the Shah of Persia to Paris and London, and his reception by King Edward at Portsmouth, may probably be connected with this competition for trade and concessions that was rampant over the world. The Russian Press was preaching that in Afghanistan the time had come for setting aside the old Anglo-Russian agreement which precluded Russia from political intercourse with that country; Russia desired as full a political and commercial intercourse as was enjoyed by England. But perhaps the chief subjects of conversation between the Kaiser and the Czar was Germany's growing trouble with Prussian Poland. Poland was to Germany somewhat as Ireland was to England: a reluctant member of the Empire. It was sought to Germanize the province by settling Germans there in preponderant numbers, and by forbidding the use of the Polish language in the schools or at public meetings. On June 5th the Kaiser had made a speech at Marienburg which had given great offence, and which, as so often happened, his Chancellor had to explain. "Polish aggressiveness was resolved to encroach on Germanism," so that he must summon his people to preserve its national possessions. The speech, said the Chancellor two days later, was quite in order, being merely the expression of the monarch's duty to preserve the unity of the Prussian monarchy (*Reden*, i. 339). There was, he said an agitation for a Greater Poland; for the restoration of an independent Poland; and an opposition to the German speech and nationality. The Germans had no thought of expelling their Polish fellow-citizens from their homes, nor of wishing to rob them of their speech or religion; their only hope was to make them into good and loyal Prussians and Germans, in return for the benefits conferred on them for a century and a half; but they could not stand the boycotting of German merchants and workmen in the small German towns (*ib.* i. 348). But neither these smooth words nor the Imperial conversations made much difference; for when the Kaiser went to Posen in September to unveil a monument to his mother the Poles absented themselves

from the festivities, and the Kaiser in vain made a conciliatory speech, promising non-interference with their religion.

Towards England and her Royal Family the Kaiser, it was said, "took every opportunity of showing friendliness" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 302). In September Lord Roberts and other English officers, and Mr. Brodrick, our Secretary for War, were invited to attend the German military manœuvres; and it has been said that it was to a really eloquent address by the Kaiser that the Duke of Cambridge and the British, American, and Austrian Ambassadors were invited to listen at Hamburg in August on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument to the Kaiser's mother. But the not infrequent indiscreet remarks in the Kaiser's speeches tended to make them a terror to Europe. His relations with King Edward improved. On October 13th the King, at luncheon with Baron Eckhardstein, "spoke throughout with great cordiality of the Kaiser" (*Eckhardstein*, 238). In November the Kaiser came over to pay a birthday visit to his uncle at Sandringham. He arrived on the 8th, but Eckhardstein, who went with the Embassy Staff to meet him at Port Victoria, gives a sorry story of his reception. At breakfast on the *Hohenzollern* "the atmosphere was one of extreme depression, as the Kaiser was very hard hit by the icy, indeed positively unfriendly, reception given him in the English Press." The most that could be said of the visit was that it "went off with correctitude." And "as he again disappeared on board the yacht, King Edward was heard to breathe, 'Thank God, he's gone'" (*ib.* 245).

This unfortunate antipathy between uncle and nephew clearly did not make for goodwill between their subjects. Lord Suffield, in his *Memories*, published in 1913, declares that the Kaiser was and always had been "very fond of England and the English, in spite of all that people might say to the contrary"; that he had "always worked for peace with England, but that, in spite of all his really earnest endeavours and his sincere love of this country, there had

always been friction between the two Courts." Lord Suffield could only account for this friction by attributing it to the jealousy so habitual between Courts. It was not the Emperor's fault, he says, for he had not only been greatly attached to Queen Victoria, but regarded her with the greatest respect and veneration; she, in fact, died literally in his arms when she passed away at Osborne (268). And, if Lord Esher is right, not only that King Edward "liked Germany and the German people," but that mutual respect and real admiration attached uncle and nephew to one another (*Influence of King Edward*, 56), such testimony can hardly be reconciled with very opposite statements save by supposing that their relations worsened with time. And the Kaiser's letters to the Czar show that for England as a Power the Kaiser had the greatest jealousy: a jealousy which was evidently fully shared by the Czar. In any case the fact that fate was driving the subjects of the Kaiser and the King to a scarcely avoidable war disposes for all time of the traditional monarchical fiction that Courts or blood-relationships of monarchs act as preservatives of the peace of the world.

But in 1902 the future, of course, was hidden from men's eyes. Conciliation and moderation were in the air. In May the Kaiser, in proof of his confidence in the fidelity and loyalty of Alsace-Lorraine to the Empire, and as "a special proof of his favour," did away with the dictatorship paragraphs of the Constitution of 1879, which conferred despotic powers on the Governor of those provinces in case of need, so completely had all fear of separation by force vanished from the German mind. When a demonstration in favour of the *revanche* occurred at Strasburg, "on this and on other similar occasions the German Government showed a spirit of forbearance and courtesy towards France" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1902, 306). And great satisfaction was felt in Germany at the help liberally given by the British authorities to the German expedition in May to the Niger Delta for the purpose of establishing a coaling station and trade factories with the Hinterland of

the Cameroons. Jealousy of German colonization had hardly begun. But jealousy of German commerce was developing rapidly, especially with reference to the contemplated railway to Bagdad, for which Germany had got a concession from the Sultan of Turkey in 1899. Russia, which had tried by a secret agreement with China to obtain exclusive commercial interests in Manchuria, had no wish to have Germany pushing her way into Asia; nor was England desirous to submit to a partnership with her in the spoils of Mesopotamia nor as a neighbour in the Persian Gulf. It is probable that at Reval and at Sandringham the Kaiser attempted some accommodation with his cousin and with his uncle in respect of the Bagdad railway, which he told the Czar, on January 3, 1902, that he intended German capital to build.

The Sandringham visit greatly offended the strong anti-German feeling in England which the Boer War had provoked, especially when it was followed the next month by joint action with Germany and Italy against Venezuela. All three countries had pecuniary claims against Venezuela for debts and injuries, and when her ports were blockaded and three of her gunboats were seized by British and German cruisers there was much excitement in the United States and great mistrust of Germany's assurances that such punitive measures would not end in a seizure of territory and utter disregard of the Monroe doctrine. Kipling expressed the anger felt with Mr. Balfour's Government for co-operating with Germany in a poem to which Count Bülow referred slightingly in the Reichstag, and which, together with other similar outbursts in the English Press, he attributed rightly to the bitterness caused in England by the Continental Press during the Boer War (*Reden*, i. 400).

"Who can forget," wrote Professor Schiemann, "the outbursts of rage which the Venezuelan affair let loose against us—and against the Balfour Ministry? It was as though treason against the country had been committed" (iv. 319). The Venezuelan episode afforded an opportunity to some journalists for seeking to sow dissen-

sions between Germany and her two colleagues in the affair, and the most groundless rumours were propagated about Germany's intentions to annex some American republic; the *New York Herald* professed good authority for the statement that after Venezuela Germany intended to attack Columbia and finally Brazil (*ib.* i. 435). Nothing seemed impossible to the credulity of the world where Germany was concerned.

Yet France, too, needed to be watched in Siam. In 1896 we had made a convention with France which guaranteed the independence of Siam within the valley of the Menan; east of that district was to be under French influence, west of it under British. The convention was differently interpreted. Both Lord Salisbury and Lord Dufferin held that it was meant to secure the independence of the whole of Siam, and that therefore the French had no right to gain territory nor to fortify posts on the east; but the French held that the independence only applied to the Menan Valley. The French Colonial party was now pressing for the annexation of the whole of Siam, or for a French protectorate, and their wishes were to some extent met by a convention which M. Delcassé succeeded in making with Siam on October 7th, very much to the advantage of France and with great cessions of territory from Siam. France's declaration that she intended no permanent settlement was received with the usual credence attached to such diplomatic assurances.

The year drew to a close with some symptoms of a fall of temperature from fever-heat to temperate. By degrees Japan, Great Britain, and Germany withdrew their forces from China, only Russia sticking to Manchuria. After eight months of fierce discussion Mr. Balfour's Education Bill passed its third reading on December 3rd by 286 to 184. In India the Coronation Durbar attested, so far as magnificence could attest it, the love and loyalty of India for the Empire. The boundary quarrel between Argentina and Chili was settled on November 20th by the admirable arbitration award of King Edward. Christmas thus brought

some cessation of strife. But probably the most important event from the point of view of world-history was the sending of the first Press message by Marconi wireless across the Atlantic on December 22nd. But whether this was to prove a greater blessing or a greater curse for the peace of the world no one could foretell.

CHAPTER III

1903

THE KING'S POLITICAL TRAVELS

A JOINT war, such as united Great Britain with Germany and Italy in hostilities against Venezuela, tends naturally to promote friendly relations between the allied nations. But in this case the result, unfortunately, was different. There was much grumbling on our side against an alliance which was thought to be contaminating, especially when, on January 20th, in the midst of negotiations with Venezuela, a German man-of-war bombarded San Carlos. *The Times* remarked that Lord Lansdowne seemed to have no clear idea of the dislike felt in England for this co-operation with Germany. The tone of our Press was such that in Germany the beginning of the anti-German agitation in England was traced to this very episode of combined action for a common interest (*Schiemann*, vii. 417). The British Government was constrained to deny the existence of any German alliance. Sir E. Grey expressed the general feeling on February 8th. England and Germany, he said, had often co-operated in different parts of the world; but he did not think such co-operation had been satisfactory, and, though he wished for friendly relations with Germany, he deprecated their being at the cost of our good relations with France, Russia, or the United States. On February 17th Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman struck a more friendly note in the debate on the Address. He did not agree that in no circumstances should we join hands with Germany, and he thanked Mr. Balfour for having four days before rebuked the tendency to foment feelings of international bitterness, jealousy, and dislike. It was also a notable fact that our

co-operation with Italy in the same hostile action against Venezuela evoked no such opposition as our co-operation with Germany.

By the middle of February the negotiations for a settlement were agreed upon, and the blockade of the three Powers was raised. The claims against Venezuela were to be referred to the Hague Tribunal, Great Britain and Italy each receiving £5,500 on the signing of the Protocol of February 13th, and Germany £76,000, payable by instalments. The question of the priority of the claims between the blockading and the non-blockading Powers was to be submitted to the Hague, where the adjudication lasted from September 21st to November 15th (*Ann. Reg.*, 1903, 429).

The German Chancellor said, on January 20th, that England and Germany had acted in the matter with perfect loyalty to each other, though the English Press had treated Germany in this and other affairs with marked "ill-will" (*Reden*, ii. 286). But the episode contributed nothing to the improvement of Anglo-German relations, nor to the popularity of Mr. Balfour's shaking Government.

Nor did the episode improve the relations between Germany and the United States. So long ago as December 11, 1901, Germany had given notice of her intention of taking proceedings for the recovery of her claims against Venezuela, and the Government at Washington had replied that it was no part of the Monroe doctrine to protect any American State from just punishment for misconduct. A similar notice by the British Government was not given till November 11, 1902. The prevalent notion in England that the Anglo-German agreement to act together was the result of the Kaiser's visit to the King at Sandringham had no foundation.

The farther we got from the Boer War the keener became our preparations for the next war. Every war brings another one nearer, so that there is no such thing as "a last war." The naval estimates were three millions in advance of those of the preceding year, and the First Lord fairly described

them as hitherto "unparalleled either in peace or war." Mr. Ritchie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget speech, spoke of the 62 millions for the Army and Navy as "gigantic items"; but he lived in what now seems a Golden Age. There was, of course, a new scheme for improving and increasing the Army. Consols fell from 114 to 90; rarely was there so black a year as 1903 from the financial point of view (*Ann. Reg.*, 1903, 242). The Thanes were beginning to fly from Macbeth; in other words, many Unionists were seceding from Mr. Balfour because they were irate with the Government's army scheme; with what in those days seemed a reckless expenditure; and with the weakness of its foreign policy. The annihilation on April 28th of a British force in Somaliland when in pursuit of a Mullah, called the "Mad," when Colonel Plunkett and 8 officers and 174 men lost their lives, added to the growing dissatisfaction with the Coalition Government of Unionists and Liberal Imperialists.

Probably the King was sensible of the relief of a temporary escape from the troubles of his kingdom when on March 31st, against the wish of his Ministry, says Lord Redesdale (*Memoirs*, ii. 758), he left Portsmouth on the *Victoria and Albert* yacht, bound for Portugal, where he was cordially welcomed by King Carlos. But from a journey whose more ostensible motives were health and pleasure, important political issues were not excluded. *The Times* derived it from "one of the most important Portuguese statesmen" that the result was an offensive and defensive alliance, and an English guarantee of the colonial integrity of Portugal. The King's words that the "unassailable maintenance of commerce" in both the dominions and colonies of England and Portugal was the object of his dearest wishes and endeavours was interpreted in Germany to mean that England would protect Portugal's African colonies from the piratical German Empire (Reventlow, 199; *Schiemann*, iii. 122–3). A threat was seen where perhaps no threat was intended. In any case it was the beginning of the uneasiness with which from that time

onwards the foreign travels of the King were regarded in Germany.

From Portugal the King, after touching at Gibraltar, Malta, and Naples, reached Rome on April 27th. He was warmly welcomed by the King of Italy, and "the enthusiasm of the populace was extraordinary." His visit to Pope Leo XIII on April 29th still further emphasized the growing political affinity between England and Italy. Fear on the part of Germany of an attempt to detach Italy from the Triple Alliance probably explained the visit of the Kaiser to Rome which followed so soon afterwards, on May 2nd. Rightly or not, English historians detected "a certain coldness" in the Italians' acclamations of the Kaiser and their displeasure at the military pomp of the Kaiser's escort. Nor, indeed, were signs wanting that the Triple Alliance was "distinctly losing ground in people's minds, if not in diplomatic arrangements"; and perhaps one real indication of this was the fact that, shortly after the Kaiser's departure, Italy on May 7th denounced her commercial treaties with her two allies Germany and Austria (*Ann. Reg.*, 1903, 264).

From Rome King Edward travelled to Paris, arriving in that gaily decorated capital, amid the cheering of enormous crowds, on May 1st, and staying there till May 5th, when he returned to London, where again enormous crowds cheered his return. At Paris he laid the foundations of the following year's Dual Entente. He made speeches at the British Chamber of Commerce and at the Hôtel de Ville; responded at the Elysée to the toast proposed in his honour by President Loubet; had frequent meetings with the President and with M. Delcassé, the Foreign Minister, as well as with other persons of political or social importance. At a later date the *Temps* referred to Edward VII and M. Delcassé as the joint authors of the Anglo-French Entente. It was doubtless the result of a long contemplated and prepared move for the protection of French and English interests against German rivalry or attack M. Poincaré was probably wrong in assigning it to a sudden impulse,

when he said in 1913 that with a swift glance Edward VII calculated the work to be done. He promptly contemplated " as both possible and desirable a combination which, without breaking up existing alliances, and without incurring the reproach of provocation or offence to any Power, would associate in a common work for peace and for united effort the two richest nations of the world " (Legge's *King Edward in His True Colours*, 85). So it might appear to President Poincaré in 1913, and such might have been the King's hope in 1903; but the uneasiness it was bound to produce in Germany was insufficiently regarded, and the first definite step was taken on the road that was to lead to the war of 1914. Baron Eckhardstein, who was in Paris at the time, wrote with some alarm about it to the Chancellor: " There is now a new Triple Alliance in course of formation which, even if it is not put in writing, is calculated to cause us, to say the least, political and economic trouble throughout the world " (248). So estrangement from Germany increased *pari passu* with our friendship with France. President Loubet and M. Delcassé returned the King's visit from July 6th to 9th; and a dinner with the King at Buckingham Palace, a smart luncheon at the Guildhall, a visit to Windsor Castle, a State ball at Buckingham Palace, made the days pass fast and merrily that assisted the negotiation for the Arbitration Treaty between England and France that was signed on October 14th. The treaty excluded, indeed, from the scope of settlement by arbitration all questions affecting the vital interests, the independence, or the honour of either country: the most fruitful and frequent causes of wars; but it was a great step in advance, and the King's skilful diplomacy undoubtedly removed many causes of friction that had for long prevented a good understanding between the English Monarchy and the French Republic. So it came to pass that by August of this year the King had " come to be looked upon abroad as the greatest diplomatist of the day " (Blunt's *Diaries*, ii. 68).

The Arbitration idea as a preserver of peace enjoyed another triumph this year in reference to the disputed

Alaskan boundary between Canada and the United States. Russia, having sold to the United States the interests she had in the territory under a treaty made with England in 1825, was now represented by the States. It was accordingly agreed that a bare majority of three American and three British jurists should decide on the interpretation of the treaty, and four out of the six gave a decision which, though it cut off Canada, much to her disappointment, from any approach by sea to the golden region of Klondyke, was wisely accepted as a lesser evil than continued disputation.

It is said that among King Edward's superstitions was that of expecting some disaster if two knives were allowed to lie on a table before him at the same time: for which reason his guests might never be served with more than one knife at a time (Legge, *More About King Edward*, 299). If international disaster could have been averted by regarding only France and disregarding Germany as beyond the range of vision, the eulogies that have been lavished on the King's foreign policy would have needed no qualification. Madame de Thébes, the prophetess whom he so often consulted (*ib.* 309), imparted to him no prescience of the disaster that was to come four years after his death.

Whilst the King was on his travels, Mr. Chamberlain returned to England on March 14th, having endeavoured with much success to heal the sores of racial antagonism between British and Dutch which the war consequent on his Imperialist policy had done so much to foment. Conquest and annexation, the first steps on the path of Imperialism, was shortly to be followed by the demand for the protection of trade within the Empire: its logical corollary.

The King on his return found many anxieties awaiting him in the field of foreign affairs. The question of the Bagdad railway was beginning to cause friction. The Convention of March 5, 1903, between the German Anatolian Railway Company and Turkey, to which England's consent had not been asked, seemed to concentrate under German

control the whole scheme of future railway development in that region, to the exclusion of England; and on the admission of General Von der Golz on March 27th that the railway was to be extended with British consent to Koweit on the Persian Gulf, and that the railway would constitute the shortest mail-route between Paris and Bombay, fears about our interests in India and Mesopotamia naturally found expression in Parliament (April 8th). Russia, too, was among the rivals for the possession of the Persian Gulf, and was engaged in trying to get Persia under her control by means of loans, commercial treaties, and concessions for roads. Could we support the Bagdad railway scheme without offending Russia? Germany had hoped that we should subscribe one-fourth of the capital required; but on April 22nd Mr. Balfour announced the intention of the Government to cold-shoulder the plan altogether. It was argued that it should be an international concern, not dependent only on French and German capital. The decision gave immense satisfaction to the country, correspondent with the mortification felt in Germany at the check thus given to a scheme which might have proved of immeasurable benefit to the world. A great change of feeling about the Bagdad railway had been part of the strong antagonism to Germany which had been ushered in with the new reign. Only three days after the signature, on November 27, 1899, of the Convention at Constantinople which had placed the railway in German hands, *The Times* had declared that there was "no power into whose hands Englishmen would more gladly see the enterprise fall" than into Germany's. But since then all sorts of idle alarms had been raised to defeat a scheme which would have benefited the world, not Germany alone, by converting 300,000 acres of desert into flourishing cornland. Germany felt herself debarred from sharing in the task of world-improvement such as France was carrying out with success in Algeria and Tunisia and ourselves in Egypt. On May 5th Lord Lansdowne uttered a general threat to any Power it might concern: England would regard a naval base or a

fortified post erected by any Power on the Persian Gulf as "a very grave menace" to British interests, and one which would be resisted "by all the means at our disposal." In other words, it would be a *casus belli*.

Trouble, too, was brewing in the Balkans, where the Turks, in their suppression of the Macedonian insurrection, committed atrocities on a scale to which even a staggered Europe could no longer be indifferent. Turkish misgovernment cried loudly for reform, and the first move in this direction came from Austria and Russia. Their proposed scheme of reforms was announced by Lord Lansdowne on March 13th as having been presented to the Porte on February 21, 1903. Nothing much came of these efforts to stay the course of the massacres and burnings that horrified the world; for later in the year the German Ambassador at Constantinople, Baron von Bieberstein, was instructed "to give the Sultan an energetic lecture" that it was high time for him to carry out the reforms drawn up at Mürzsteg on October 9, 1903, by Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, and Count Goluchowski, the Austrian Foreign Minister. The Sultan was very tough, wrote the Kaiser to the Czar, and seemed to think that a refusal to comply with the wishes of Austria and Russia, "backed by me," would do him no great harm (*Letter* 28, November 11, 1903). It had to be made plain to the Sultan that "on no account whatever would the Kaiser raise a hand in his support or speak a word in his favour if he refused compliance with the wishes of the Austrian and Russian Emperors, who had shown almost angelic patience and forbearance with him." The Kaiser added that Bulgaria was showing dissatisfaction with the reforms as insufficient, and was turning to Italy, England, and France, and thus bringing about the old "Crimean Combination" against Russian interests in the East and the union of the democratical Parliamentary countries against the Imperial monarchies of Europe. And certainly this was the main tendency of the time, and one consequence of King Edward's diplomacy to that date.

It was very natural for Germany to support Russia and Austria in this matter of the Balkan reforms, and to express German approval of Russian policy the Crown Prince of Germany had been sent to the Russian Court in January. There was no reason to regard this German action as otherwise than perfectly sincere, but in England it was condemned as an endeavour to "curry favour" with Russia, in order to facilitate the negotiation of a commercial treaty with her adapted to the new German tariff (*Ann. Reg.*, 1903, 293). And in the Far as in the Near East, Russian policy caused much disquietude. Russia showed no disposition to evacuate Manchuria, as she was pledged to do; rather she showed a marked disposition to plant herself therein permanently, and to treat Manchuria, as well as Mongolia, as a Russian protectorate, from which the commerce of other countries was to be rigorously excluded. Anarchy was at its worst in Russia this year: strikes, riots, murders, revolutionary movements in the Army, made up her history, with a massacre and plundering of the Jews at Kisheniff on April 20th that appalled the world. War could hardly make matters worse, and might even improve them for certain interests. Nor was Japan averse to a war, fearing for her interests in Mongolia and Korea. War with Russia was strongly desired by the Japanese public, and a declaration of war was only averted by the resistance offered to it by six of Japan's most distinguished statesmen (*Ann. Reg.*, 1903, 385–6). On December 4th the Kaiser imparted to the Czar a rumour that Japan was secretly arming the Chinese with 20,000 new rifles and other things "behind your and my backs against us," inflaming the Chinese against the White Race in general, and constituting a grave danger to Russia's rear in the event of a conflict with Japan on the coast (*Letter* 29).

The Kaiser's letter reveals a certain sympathy between Germany and Russia in the Far East; but the more restricted interest of Germany in that region was repeatedly insisted on by Count Bülow. "If there is a point in East Asia, I may say in the world, where we have nothing to

seek, it is Manchuria" (*Reden*, ii. 5, December 10, 1903). In East Asia German policy was simple, he said on the same day: "to maintain and develop what we possess there, but not to burn our fingers in affairs which do not concern us" (*ib.* ii. 24). "It lay formerly, and still did so, in the interest of all the Powers, and in any case in that of German policy, that out of the war in Asia (between Russia and Japan) no world-war should develop" (*ib.* ii. 76, April 12, 1904). There is no reason to doubt that in these utterances he was perfectly sincere. But Militarist States speak in vain to one another.

In the midst of these complications occurred one of the worst political assassinations recorded in history: the murder of King Alexander of Servia, of Queen Draga, and the Prime Minister and the War Minister by Servian military officers (June 12, 1903). Such was the moral perversion of the Servian people that the Colonel, who perished after blowing up the royal apartments with a bomb, was eulogized as having died "on the field of honour for his fatherland"; the other conspirators as having rendered their country "a tremendous service"; the Skupstchina and all the Servian papers approved of the crime; and at a great Christian service the Army received the thanks and praises of the nation for its heroic action. The Czar, the Prince of Montenegro, and the Emperor of Austria sent congratulatory telegrams to King Peter, elected on June 15th; but Count Bülow regretted that the assassination had not been followed immediately by an invasion of Servia by Austria and by the occupation of Belgrade and other important places: a course which might have averted later troubles (Baron Margutti's *Francis Joseph*, 223). The Austrian Emperor called the deed "an iniquitous and accursed crime," and happily in England the same view prevailed, as was shown by the withdrawal from Belgrade of the British Consul-General, and by the refusal of King Edward to be represented by an ambassador in a country reeking with so abominable a tragedy. But one interpretation of this was that the King refused to recognize Peter "of set purpose,"

as he wished to keep Servia up his sleeve as a possible reward for Austria in return for her dropping her alliance with Germany (*ib.* 258).

But in England attention to foreign affairs is easily diverted by some new political sensation at home ; and this was now provided by a question of internal importance which threw all Continental events into the shade, and which contained the seeds of the ultimate disruption of the seemingly invulnerable Unionist Government. On May 15, the same day on which the Prime Minister was defending the repeal of the tax laid on corn in the previous year, Mr. Chamberlain launched at Birmingham his policy of a preferential tariff on colonial imports for the closer union of the constituent parts of the Empire. For the rest of the year little else was talked or thought about but the relative merits of Free Trade and Protection. The Cabinet itself was soon as divided as the country at large. Mr. Balfour gave no certain lead to his distracted followers. On October 6th, prior to starting his Protection crusade, Mr. Chamberlain resigned his office of Colonial Secretary ; and on the same day, by reason of their disagreement with him, Mr. Ritchie, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord George Hamilton, Secretary for India, saw fit to resign their respective offices. The Duke of Devonshire's resignation dealt the Government a still harder blow. Rising tempers brought strong words to the surface. Lord Spencer, at the Eighty Club on October 8th, spoke of the great Imperialist as "one of the most reckless and unscrupulous of statesmen, who never hesitated to use any weapon that would advance his cause" ; and on October 19th, at Manchester, Lord Morley (then untitled) declared that he had never known a group of politicians in a more squalid or humiliating position than that of the Government. On the other hand, Lord Wolseley threw the weight of his wisdom into the opposite balance. But the quarrel tended to reunite the Liberal Party. Lord Rosebery, on November 7th at Leicester, appealed to the Free Trade Unionists to join the orthodox Liberals to ward

off Protection, and on November 17th, at Frome, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman graciously and gladly accepted the olive-branch.

Owing to this fiscal excitement, less attention was bestowed than was deserved on the movements of the monarchs of Europe in their own or in other countries. King Edward and the Queen, after a visit to loyal Scotland in May, paid that visit to Ireland which the behaviour of certain Irish Members in the Parliament of 1902 had caused to be postponed. They arrived in Dublin on July 21st, there to be met with a vote of 40 to 27 in the Dublin Corporation against presenting them with the conventional Royal Address; it was Home Rule that Ireland wanted, not a King who was powerless to grant it, even if he so desired. It was perhaps some consolation for the rudeness at Dublin that at Maynooth College, Archbishop Mannix, President of the College for the next nine years, received the Sovereign with an enthusiastic welcome, and the students, in his honour, displayed a picture of the King's recent Derby winner, Diamond Jubilee, in a frame decorated with the King's racing colours. After a tour that included Belfast and other principal Irish towns, and that lasted for ten days, the King and Queen returned to England on July 31st; but it remains probable that for the pacification of Ireland more was done by the passing of Wyndham's Land Purchase Act, to enable tenants to acquire the freehold of their holdings, than even by the smiles of the blandest and most benevolent of British Sovereigns.

Three weeks after the King's return, on August 22nd, Lord Salisbury made his final exit from the world's stage: a statesman whose great merits as a Prime Minister were much enhanced by contrast with the defects of his successors. He had done much at one time to maintain friendly relations with Germany, and had greeted the alliance between that country and Austria as "glad tidings of great joy"; but the praise often ascribed to him of having averted a European coalition against England during the Boer War is more justly due to the German Chancellor, Count Bülow,

who, overriding the passions of the German people, was consistently averse to incurring any such risk at a time when the German fleet, then in its infancy, lay hopelessly at our mercy.

International intrigue continued to be sustained with great spirit on all sides. In the first days of September the King's visit to the Emperor of Austria at Vienna was interpreted in Germany as aiming at the detachment of Austria from the Triple Alliance. It has been denied that there was any policy for encircling Germany; as by Lord Haldane, who writes: "The notion of an encirclement of Germany, excepting in defence against aggression by Germany herself, existed only in the minds of nervous Germans" (*Before the War*, 36). But the belief in it was universal in Germany, and was shared by two successive Chancellors, Bülow and Bethmann-Hollweg. Baron Margutti writes of "the policy of isolating Germany, which the English King Edward VII, true to his principles, had taken up with rare diplomatic skill and pursued with no less determination" (*Life and Times of the Emperor Francis Joseph*, 20). The Baron thought that the object of such a policy was to keep Germany at peace by cooling her ardour for war (*ib.* 266); and of course in this respect there was much to be gained from the mere impression that the loyalty of Austria to the Triple Alliance might be undermined. Attempts on the loyalty of the Austrian Emperor became almost annual events. Hardly had the King's visit in September 1903 passed than the Kaiser visited Vienna, "to display to the world the firmness of the alliance between Austria-Hungary and Germany." It was necessary, said Count Bülow, "to stiffen the backbone of the rulers of Austria-Hungary by personal conference" (*ib.* 223). Of the meeting at Ischl in August 1904 the Baron asserts that he heard definitely from the members of the King's suite that the King had come "in order to make tangible proposals to the Emperor with a view to loosening the alliance with Germany. . . . Edward VII was exerting himself deliberately to secure the isolation of Germany, and began by bringing pressure to

bear on the Emperor Francis Joseph," though without success. At Marienbad that same month the King unfolded his plans with "greater freedom, and the old Emperor returned from Marienbad very depressed." The next year, in August 1905, it was the same story: "It cost Francis Joseph a tremendous effort to resist the enticements of a man so highly gifted and well versed in diplomacy as the British King." As a result of an afternoon drive on that visit to Ischl the Emperor returned "quite broken, and seemed utterly worn out"; he hardly spoke at dinner, and "had to make an extreme effort not to collapse in his chair" (*ib.* 260). In 1906 there was no meeting, but the Kaiser visited Vienna in June, to indicate the firmness of the German and Austrian alliance. The King and the Austrian Emperor met again both in 1907 and in 1908, but always with the same result, and on the last occasion the King's departure with his suite was "in an almost frigid atmosphere." And when for the last time the King was at Marienbad in 1909, and asked to be allowed to visit the Emperor on his return journey, the offer was "courteously but very definitely declined." Nothing could shake the Emperor's loyalty to Germany, though, if it be true that one of the inducements to him for doing so was permission to annex Servia, it may well be that compliance with the King's wishes would have been to the ultimate advantage of Austria. Possibly the Emperor lived to regret his unbending firmness; in any case the King's death had "a shattering effect" on Francis Joseph, who thought that, had the King lived, the war of 1914 might have been averted.

The most obvious way of deterring Germany from a warlike policy, such as was commonly attributed to her, was to detach Austria and Italy from her side; but justifiable as such a policy may have been in the interests of peace, it could not conduce to friendly relations with Germany, and her constant hostility to this country during the whole of the King's reign was a consequence not altogether unnatural. It may be that the balancing of one group of Powers against another group, as of the Triple Alliance

against the Triple Entente, might keep the world at peace through mutual fear, but only on condition that each group remained proof against disintegrating forces; and it was precisely this condition that never existed, as each group was continually plotting to weaken the solidarity of the other.

There was great movement of the monarchs of Europe this autumn to their different Courts. As the Kaiser followed King Edward at Vienna, so the Czar followed the Kaiser, and the Kings of Belgium and of Greece followed the Czar. The reforms in the Balkans to be enforced on Turkey much occupied their minds. The Czar subsequently spent six weeks in Germany, where he met the Kaiser frequently at Wiesbaden, Darmstadt, and Wolfsgarten (*Hammann*, 121; *Schiemann*, iii. 320). On November 11th the Kaiser wrote to the Czar of "the charm of the two days" spent with him at Wolfsgarten on November 4th and 5th, and deplored the death of the eight-year-old daughter of the Grand Duke of Hesse, who was believed in Russia to have died of some poisoned soup intended for the Czar!

The closer sympathy between England and France, effected in great part by the visits of the King to Paris, encouraged M. Delcassé and M. Barrère to draw Italy into closer relations with France, thus tending to the formation of that new Triple Alliance which was perfected twelve years later, and which the Kaiser spoke of as "the Crimean Combination." The success of King Edward's visit to the King of Italy in April naturally raised diplomatic hopes of the good effect of a visit from the King of Italy to Paris. This visit, arranged by M. Delcassé and the Italian Count Tornielli for July, had to be postponed on account of the imminent death of Pope Leo XIII. But it took place in October, and it is remarkable that the Czar of Russia, despite his apparent attachment to the German Kaiser and to Germany, sent a letter to President Loubet, wherein he expressed his profound sympathy with France's recent agreement with England and with her *rapprochement* with

Italy (*Ann Reg.*, 1903; *Chronicle*, 30). King Victor Emmanuel's visit to Paris immediately preceded his visit to London, where, in the company of his Queen and the Italian Foreign Minister, S. Tittoni, he arrived on November 17th. More important than their stay at Windsor Castle, the Address from the City of London, the lunch with the Lord Mayor, or the cheering of crowds, were the conferences between Lord Lansdowne and Tittoni, confirming on all points the existing accord between Italy and England. Italy thus seemed to be fast veering from her old attachment to the Triple Alliance and to be coquetting with England and France. So at least it appeared to Germany, with inevitable and growing mistrust of King Edward's aims.

An estrangement was also increasing between Germany and the United States. The displeasure caused in America by the Venezuelan episode had not abated, though Germany had found it advisable to change her ambassador at Washington, Baron von Sternburg, for Dr. von Holleben. Count Bülow was compelled to disclaim all kinds of wild designs attributed to Germany. He had to declare in September that Germany had no thought of acquiring territory in South America, or of setting up a German State in Brazil by encouraging emigration to that country; Germany had no political aspirations in the New World: she only wished for as large a share as possible in the trade of South America (*Ann. Reg.*, 1903, 292–3). But this was just what other countries did not desire her to have: hence the propaganda calculated to prevent her from sharing in the commercial feast of the world.

The German Chancellor had no easy task to perform in guiding his country through these shifting quicksands of attraction and repulsion, but he performed it with consummate ability. No statesman of his time knew so well how to combine urbanity with force. Following Plato in his division of the State into reason and passion, he regarded himself, or the Government, as the embodiment of the State's Reason, to which the general public, representing its Passions, was bound to remain in subordination. Foreign

policy, therefore, was a matter solely for the head of the State; it mattered little or nothing what other people thought or wished, whether they called themselves Pan-Germans or Social Democrats. He recognized that in recent times popular passions counted far more than formerly in affecting international affairs; it was no longer a case of the people paying for the follies of their kings, as in the line of Horace, "*Quidquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi*," but of kings being forced to pay for the follies of their people. And it was his pride that as Chancellor he had conducted Germany's foreign policy with a sole view to Germany's lasting interests; he flattered himself that, whatever the popular feeling of England and Germany might be to one another, there was no change in the friendly relations between the monarchs and the Cabinets of London and Berlin (*Reden*, ii. 400, January 20, 1903). He rebuked the perpetual grumbling of certain German papers at foreign Powers, and contended that Chauvinism and patriotism were not the same things (*ib.* ii. 405). The suspicions of Germany cherished abroad he attributed mainly to the alarmist speeches and writings of his enemies the Social Democrats, who at the General Election in June increased their numbers in the Reichstag from 58 to 81. He denied against Bebel that the Kaiser's remark, "Our future is on the water," had any aggressive intention against other Powers; it did not mean that Germany hoped to drive every other Power off the sea, but only that Germany meant to use the sea as other countries used it, and as the Hanse towns had used it centuries ago (*ib.* ii. 410). As to the idea of a German fleet strong enough to overpower that of England, it was absurd, for, when the German fleet was complete, it would rank only as fourth or fifth among the fleets of the world (*ib.* ii. 409). But, although all this was ably and truly said, it had little effect in allaying the fears that were fostered on our side of the North Sea.

The feverish condition of Europe caused by two antagonistic alliances led to a general development of militarism, which happily tended to produce its own antidote in the

great spread of anti-militarist propaganda. Socialism, representing chiefly the classes that suffered most from the miseries of compulsory service, drew the main portion of its political force from a pacifism which saw in the Army itself the real source of its woes. In France such pacifist propaganda penetrated the very barracks, and when General André, the Minister of War, undertook to prosecute the disseminators of doctrines so fatal to war, he was supported in the Chamber by 441 votes to 55 on January 23, 1903 (*Ann. Reg.*, 1903, 247). In Germany militarism assumed an even more sinister aspect. Suicides arising from the maltreatment of soldiers became distressingly common. The Government tried in April to stop the scandal of such cruelties by announcing that it was not the intention of the Kaiser nor of the men's superiors that soldiers should suffer in silence, and that they debased themselves by submitting to maltreatment; but it was after this that one non-commissioned officer was convicted of 576 charges of cruelty; that Lieutenant Skilling wass entenced to fifteen months' imprisonment and to dismissal from the service for 698 cases of cruelty; and that Fransky received five years' imprisonment and degradation for having been guilty of beating the men under him or of spitting in their faces in 1,520 instances. Against the Socialists' denunciations of such frightful abuses of discipline only one answer could be made, and that was that such cases were exceptional and not typical, and that it was unreasonable to over-generalize from them to the bad state of the Army as a whole. This time-honoured plea for the protection of abuses is seldom made in vain, nor can it be denied that 180 convictions of German officers for cruelty in the course of a year showed no large percentage of irregularities in so vast a body as the German Army.

In a world where the mutual irritation of nationalities constituted the leading feature, it was unfortunate that the German Kaiser made a remark which did much to accentuate his unpopularity in England. Speaking at Hanover on December 19th, at a military banquet, he said,

in praise of the German Legion which served in the Peninsular War and at Waterloo, that, "in conjunction with Blücher and the Prussians at Waterloo, it saved the English Army from destruction." Such a reading of history could not but be displeasing to the subjects of his uncle; and, if no offence was meant, offence was naturally taken—as it often needlessly was at many other speeches of the Kaiser, of which certain sentences, torn from the context or the circumstances of the speech, could be interpreted as having a minatory purpose. "Our future is on the seas," for instance, words spoken at Stettin on September 23, 1898, on the occasion of the opening of the new harbour, and again at the Cuxhaven Regatta in June 1901, had the merely commercial meaning that in future maritime interests would absorb a larger part of German life than before (*Kaiserreden*, 340); but it was used freely by the Alarmist Press to make our flesh creep as a threat to our maritime supremacy. Mr. Ellis Barker's article on the Kaiser in the November number of the *Fortnightly Review*, 1902, was a good specimen of a literature purposely directed to the promotion of national ill-feeling. It was dreadful to read how the Kaiser's "desire to increase the territory of his country was more than an ambition with him: it was a passion" (*Modern Germany*, 33); yet Sir Charles Dilke had described our own King much in the same way, as wanting "to take everything everywhere in the world" (*Life*, i. 500). It was indicated by the same writer that the Kaiser was at one with the wild dreams of the Pan-Germans for the absorption of Holland, Switzerland, and Denmark (*Modern Germany*, 41), though Prince Bülow's declaration was verified by facts, that no German with any claims to reason had any thought of such a thing; the idea was quite insensate (*Reden*, iii. 358). And, putting German Imperialism at its worst, it was admitted, even by a *Quarterly Reviewer*, that the Pan-German visions of expansion were "no vaster than our own Imperialist ideals, and with a far greater weight of organized force behind them" (July 1908, 93). Nor was the Chancellor's argument unfair, that it was absurd

to make the German Government responsible for everything that appeared in the Press, seeing that in no country had the Government less control of the Press than in Germany, as was shown by the frequent Press attacks on the Government and even on the Kaiser himself (*Reden*, iii. 326). It was true, as the Chancellor said on December 14th of the closing year, that if the relations between England and Germany were not such as were pleasing to reasonable people, the fact was due to the presence in each country of persons who attributed to the other designs and tendencies of which the majority of reasonable people had never even thought (*ib.* ii. 281).

But it was to little purpose that the Chancellor consistently and repeatedly belittled the importance of Pan-German propaganda. On our side it was taken much too seriously: as, for example, in Mr. W. T. Arnold's book on *German Ambitions*, which, having originally appeared in letters to the *Spectator* under the signature of *Vigilans sed Æquus*, was published this year. The author raked up all the splenetic utterances he could find against this country by German professors or publicists. "The depth and truculence of German ill-will" to us had been incidentally revealed by the Boer War, but "the outburst of bile was too universal and too acrid" to be explained by that war alone (1). Yet the French or Russian Press might have been ransacked with equal success. Anonymous writing of no authority whatever served Mr. Arnold's turn as well as another. What if the author of *Germania Triumphans* did foresee the expansion of German territory to the Dnieper and the Volga, or dream of the Crimea as the centre of the future German Empire (73), or of England expelled from Egypt, and of Turkey ruling in her place? (77). Why quote from a literature described by Mr. Arnold himself as "absolutely insane"? (83). Germany had always been prolific of such visionaries. When, in 1853, Paul de Legarde, orientalist and theologian, had pronounced the acquisition of Trieste a vital question for Germany (*Deutsche Schriften*, 1892, 29), or when, in 1863, Rodbertus, the economist, had

expressed the hope of one day seeing Germany succeeding to the heirship of Turkey and regiments of German soldiers and German workmen stationed on the Bosphorus, Europe had not turned a hair over the prospect; but now any idle dream of German expansion was raked up from the past and made to serve that passion for alarm which was the best nutriment for the growth of hostility between England and Germany. When Dr. Karl Eisenhart, another writer included in Mr. Arnold's list of "half-sane" Pan-Germans, declared, in his *Abrechnung mit England* ("*Reckoning with England*") in 1900, that the treatment of the Samoan dispute by England and America had made an irreconcilable enemy of the greatest and strongest military Power in the world, which was capable of nursing for two centuries its hopes of revenge (89), was it necessary to pay the least attention to such foolish vapouring?

It was from the mutual irritation due mainly to such deliberate or credulous misrepresentation of each other's designs that a mental atmosphere arose between England and Germany from which an ultimate state of war could hardly fail to follow. Imperialism, or the idea of force and might as the last word in foreign politics, had gained in every country the upper hand. Herbert Spencer, one of the chief of our nineteenth-century philosophers, proved himself also one of our chief prophets in a sphere where prophecy was not very difficult. He died in October of this year (1903), but on August 10th he is said to have "lamented the disappearance of 'right' from the range of modern politics in Europe, and denounced the Transvaal War as an outrage on humanity. 'There is coming,' he said, 'a reign of *force* in the world, and there will be again a general war for mastery, when every kind of brutality will be practised'" (Blunt's *Diaries*, ii. 69). As came, of course, to pass in the fulfilment of the necessary years.

CHAPTER IV

1904

THE ANGLO-FRENCH ENTENTE

The chief world-event of 1904 was the war between Russia and Japan; for thus the negotiations of the previous year finally ended early in February, when the Japanese attacked the Russian ironclads at Port Arthur before any declaration of war. It has been freely alleged that the German Kaiser was the cause of the war, but it was so much the habit of the time to attribute all evil happenings to the Kaiser that the allegation cannot pass without inquiry. The story is definite enough, if Dr. Dillon's memory of a conversation he had with Count Witte, the Russian Finance Minister, may be trusted. The Count expressed himself as "absolutely sure" that as soon as the Kaiser had "decided to weaken Russia, he pushed her into the Far Eastern swamp. . . . It was he who laid the snare into which the Czar fell. . . . Wilhelm II is the author of the war. . . . It was he who pushed Russia into the war with Japan" (Dillon's *Eclipse of Russia*, 347–363).

But the statement was bare of evidence, and Dr. Dillon himself gives an account of the origin of the war which leaves the Kaiser outside it altogether. He ascribes an entirely Russian origin to the war, which resulted from the machinations of three Russians, friends of the Czar, who by reason of certain lumber concessions on the Yalu outwitted such statesmen as Count Witte, Count Lamsdorff, and General Kuropatkin, and prevented the complete evacuation of Manchuria. A "pair of intriguers" (Abaza and Bezobrazoff), "in their quest of pelf, plunged the country into a war which cost hundreds of thousands of human lives" (*ib.* 283). It was at a special Council held on January 28,

1904, that "an untruth minted by Abaza and passed off on the Mikado's Government" caused the war. So Count Witte himself told Dr. Dillon, and in his *Memoirs* the Count repeated this story, though there he made the Czar himself the primary cause: "he alone is to be blamed for that most unhappy war" (186). The advice of the Russian Foreign Minister and of the Minister of War not to evacuate Manchuria accorded with the Czar's own "thirst for military glory and conquests" (*ib.* 101).

Though again accusing the Kaiser of having dragged Russia into the war (414), the Count clearly explained the war as of purely Russian origin. He was, says Dillon, "so incensed against the gang that was answerable for the war that he could with difficulty curb his tongue when talking about them" (*Eclipse of Russia*, 287). But then why such anger with the gang, if it was all the Kaiser's doing; and, if the Czar alone was responsible, how could the Kaiser have been so too?

As we were united to Japan by the alliance of 1902, and as France had been in alliance with Russia for many years, the danger arose of France and England becoming involved in the conflict between their respective allies. Happily King Edward was firm against any war with Russia; his sympathies were thought to be entirely on her side ("*entschieden russenfreundlich gemeint*," says *Schiemann*, iv. 80); and he had in this country the support of a large peace party. But in Russia the feeling against us was very bitter; "The attitude of the Court clique and of the Emperor himself," says Count Witte, "towards England was one of strong hostility" (*Memoirs*, 189). And the feeling extended to the lower classes, which regarded the Japanese War as really an English war; and our neutrality was of questionable friendliness. In June, Isvolsky issued a circular which declared that England and America had stirred up Japan against Russia (*Schiemann*, iv. 171). And in the early months of the year the Russian Press vied with our own in hostility to Germany, till in March the Russian papers received Governmental instruction to change their tone.

One might wish that our own Press had been subject to some such control; for in Germany the idea that from the very first year of the King's reign a definite anti-German policy had been adopted by our Press was not conducive to harmonious relations. Articles in *The Times*, the *Spectator*, the *National* and *Fortnightly Reviews*, gave rise to the suspicion of a design to destroy the German Empire by a triple alliance of England and France and Russia (*ib.* iv. 123). The Tory Press openly rejoiced over the new Teutophobe policy which had come in with the new reign: "this new departure, which we should never forget would have been impossible without the sagacious initiation of the British Sovereign" (*National Review*, October 1904, xliv. 227); "the King's action had emancipated Great Britain from the long and odious tradition of graceful concessions to Germany" (*ib.* 55).

In the creation of the mental atmosphere out of which war springs these workings of the Press are all-important in modern times. And of course the German Press was no more blameless of provocation than any other. The idea of an allied Press agitation against Germany in England, France, and Russia is said to have been started in St. Petersburg in April and May, 1901, by André Chéradame, author of the book previously referred to (*L'Europe et la Question d'Autriche*), which was described by a *Quarterly Reviewer* as "an epoch-making effort in this kind of literature" (October 1908, 578). Professor Schiemann predicted that the combination of Powers aimed at by this league of journalists would end in a world-war; he believed that the whole scheme was under the supervision of M. Delcassé, the French Foreign Minister, and at that time undeniably the foremost of Germany's political enemies (iv. 199). It was his organs, the organs of the French Foreign Office, the *Temps* and the *Journal des Débats*, which propagated in France this scheme of the triple anti-German alliance (*ib.* iv. 127). But the war with Japan relaxed Russia's interest in it, and the Professor exempted King Edward from personally sharing the views of *The Times* and the *National Review*,

thinking that he strove rather for the reconcilement of differences, where no essential interests were at stake (*ib.* iv. 166).

The political situation meantime remained critical throughout the year, owing to the offence given in Russia by the strong sympathies of our Press with Japan. But the continued successes of Japan exercised a wholesome influence on the inducements of the Russian Government to add to her war with Japan the trouble of another war with Japan's most formidable ally. And happily France, though Russia's ally, had been bound to us by the Arbitration Treaty of October 14, 1903. In the debate on the Address on February 2nd, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, in congratulating Mr. Balfour's Government on the friendly relations thus established with France, and on the announcement of similar agreements being in course of negotiation with Italy and the Netherlands, as conducive to the increase of mutual international friendship, commented deservedly on the "noble and worthy part" taken by the King in bringing about so pleasing a result. But the visit of the Kaiser to the King of Italy came as a reminder to the world that the Triple Alliance still existed, and that Italy's fortunes were bound up with Germany's.

The arrangements made in the July of the previous year, during the visit to London of President Loubet and M. Delcassé, for a closer connection between England and France, took practical shape on April 8th, in what was known as the Moroccan Convention or the Dual Entente. It is not going beyond the truth to say that this *entente* was by far the most important event of the King's reign. In it lay the seeds of future peace or war. It was unfortunate that the Kaiser felt aggrieved at not having been informed of it till after it was an accomplished fact. When some one told him that there was nothing in it but what every one knew, and that that was harmless enough, the Kaiser replied, "If that be so, why was it hidden from me? The concealment makes me suspect something that has not emerged into the light. And whether it is there or no, I am warranted

in suspecting it" (Dillon's *Eclipse of Russia*, 331). This was the source of much subsequent trouble.

The *entente* was received with immense jubilation in England, and was regarded as mainly the work of the King. "The *entente cordiale*, which now exists," wrote one "Quirinus" in the *National Review* for October 1904, "is certainly owing to his (the King's) initiation and largely to his work" (xliv. 51). This was the general belief both at home and abroad. And it is difficult to believe that with no better authority than general belief a statesman like Lord Cromer, on the occasion of the freedom of the City being conferred on him in honour of his many years' rule in Egypt, on October 28, 1907, would have referred to the Anglo-French Convention as the work of "that very eminent diplomatist His Majesty the King, and Lord Lansdowne." "The great and sudden improvement in Anglo-French relations was justly ascribed to the wisdom and courtesy with which the King made clear to France that the suspicions which prevailed between ourselves and her had no foundation" (Dilke's *Life*, ii. 501). Eulogy of the King reached the highest level. Sir William Harcourt pronounced him the greatest of our Kings since William the Conqueror (Lord Redesdale's *Memoirs*, i. 172). And when Mr. John Ward, M.P., at the Leeds Trade Union Congress in September, referred to the King as "almost our only statesman," the enthusiasm that greeted the remark indicated the universal feeling of the country. So almost boundless did this feeling become that in the first number of our most popular organ, *John Bull*, beginning a series of Open Letters with one to the King, its eminent editor, Mr. Bottomley, wrote: "With your Majesty on the throne a Parliament is almost a redundancy. You are our Foreign Minister, our Ambassador to all the Courts. . . . So long as you live, European war will be impossible" (May 12, 1906).

The broad effect of this momentous treaty was to give us a free hand in Egypt in exchange to France of a free hand in Morocco. In neither country were there to be any

commercial disadvantages to the subjects of the other for thirty years, and for longer periods of five years afterwards, unless agreed otherwise; and each country was to afford the other diplomatic support in their Egyptian or Moroccan affairs. And of course at any time diplomatic support might involve military support. But, despite this danger, it was a great achievement to secure peace between us and France. And it added to this security that on the same day agreements were reached on many points that had nothing to do with Egypt or Morocco. Since the peace of Utrecht in ~~1815~~, the right of the French to land and dry fish on the shores of Newfoundland had caused constant friction; and now the French gave up their old rights, in return for a rectification of their territories in West Africa. The Madagascar and New Hebrides quarrels were also settled; and the question of respective spheres of influence in Siam, so nearly a cause of war under Lord Rosebery's Government, was removed from the number of burning disputes.

This was all to the good. But in France, where the virus of Imperialism had taken a strong hold, the Colonial party still pressed for the annexation of, or a protectorate over, the whole of Siam as their only possible ultimate satisfaction (*Ann. Reg.*, 1904, 373). And in Morocco especially did the Colonial party take the same line. M. Lucien Hubert, a French deputy, and described as "an apostle full of the fire of the Colonial party," in a work on colonial expansion, devoted a chapter to the advocacy of a French protectorate over Morocco, with the French in occupation of Fez and the gradual suppression of the Sultan. He thought this the only policy for forestalling the Moroccan appetites of England and Germany. And indeed only so recently as January 1901 it was the case that in the discussions between Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire, and Eckhardstein about an Anglo-German alliance the partition of Morocco between ourselves and Germany was agreed upon (*Eckhardstein*, 222–3). In the same way Lord Salisbury, in 1898, was keen on the partition of Turkey between ourselves and

Germany and Austria as part of an alliance with the latter Powers. The right or wrong of such partitions troubled no one in those days. But against M. Lucien Hubert's proposed Moroccan policy M. Méline, once Premier of France, protested powerfully in *La République Française* of March 28, 1904, contending that the raids by Moroccan tribes on the French Algerian frontiers, which were the excuse for these proposals, required but a limited effort for their repression (Aflalo, *Truth About Morocco*, 194–200). And Germany took alarm at the avowed ambitions of the French Colonial party, and war seemed a possible development of the situation.

Nor is it improbable that war would have resulted immediately, had it been known in Germany that certain important secret clauses were signed on the same day as the public Declaration : clauses of which the world in general was to remain in ignorance till the revelation of their actual terms by the French Press in November 1911. A territorial partition of Morocco between France and Spain was the ultimate aim of these secret clauses, regardless of the rights of Germany to a voice in the matter or of the right of those other Powers which, after sittings lasting from May 19, 1880, to July 3rd, had on the latter date signed the Convention of Madrid. As it had been agreed at the Conference in London in 1871 that no international treaties, or parts of them, could be cancelled or altered by any one Power without the consent of all the other signatory Powers, Germany argued that the Madrid Convention covered the present case. Its basic principle was the independent sovereignty of Morocco, and when in 1890 Germany had made a commercial treaty with Morocco, she had first submitted it to the consent of the Powers that had signed the Convention. So she contended for a right to be consulted on the new arrangements.

It was not till October 3rd that the Franco-Spanish Declaration was made ; and when, in accordance with our agreement with France in April, this Declaration was sent to Lord Lansdowne, it was accompanied by a Convention about Morocco that was to be kept " entirely secret." On

October 6th, Lord Lansdowne "fully recognized" the "confidential character of the Convention," and promised that it should be "duly respected"; so that the complicity of our Foreign Office in the scheme of partition can admit of little doubt. Referring to the episode at a later date, Baron Greindl, the Belgian Minister at Berlin, wrote on May 10, 1911: "Besides the public agreement, France signed a secret treaty with Spain (a secret which was very badly kept) concerning the partition of the Sherifian Empire." Nor is it likely that the secret remained for long unknown to the German Chancellor: a secret that was to poison the life of Europe for the rest of the King's reign. The secrecy seemed part of a deliberate intention to exclude Germany from a policy which she thought she had a right to share. And if the policy was desirable in itself, might not territorial concessions elsewhere have been found as a solatium to Germany? But it was preferred to face the risk of war. Seven years later, when the secret clauses were revealed, Lord Lansdowne, in a debate on Morocco (November 28, 1911), defended the course taken by himself and the King: it had been well, he said, to keep the secret at the time, but the hour had come when publicity was desirable, because many people, knowing that there were secret articles, were not slow to suggest that, while contracting a strictly limited engagement, we had surreptitiously added obligations of a more extended scope. So he was glad that publicity had burst the bubble. But surely the reason given for revealing the secret in 1911 applied equally well, or indeed more so, to revealing it in 1904; to the saving of that spirit of mistrust and suspicion which was the greatest possible danger to peace in the intervening years. M. Flourens gives no proof for his theory that King Edward deliberately raised the Moroccan question in order to bring about a quarrel between France and Germany, hoping either that the Kaiser would go to war with France, in which case he would be defeated by the joint forces of England and France, or that, by declining the challenge thus addressed to him, he would suffer irrecoverable humiliation (*La France Conquise*,

72–5). But in any case the Dual Entente, with its consequent Franco-Spanish protectorate over Morocco, and "popularly ascribed to the initiation of the King" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1904, 99), brought a European war perceptibly nearer, and contributed greatly to that ultimate catastrophe in 1914.

It is probable that the Press crusade against Germany and the Kaiser were to a large extent due to the concealment from the public of salient facts connected with the *entente*. It does not appear that even all the Cabinet were aware of its secret commitments. The negotiations were carried on, with the King assenting or directing, by Mr. Balfour, Prime Minister; by Lord Lansdowne, Foreign Secretary; and by Mr. George Wyndham, the Irish Secretary. And the same three Ministers signed the treaty on behalf of England at Clouds, the house of Mr. Wyndham's father, on April 8th (Blunt's *Diaries*, ii. 163–75). With this "very small inner Cabinet of the Cabinet" rested the whole transaction. But the amazing thing is that, according to Mr. George Wyndham, it was "absolutely known to him [Wyndham] through his former connection with the War Office, that it was part of the *entente* with France that, in case of war with Germany, an English contingent of 160,000 men should be placed on the Continent in support of the French Army. It was intended that this should operate at Antwerp, but later the plan was changed," etc. (*ib.* ii. 381). It was so often denied that the *entente* implied any hostility to Germany that, unless this statement of October 13, 1911, can be disproved, it shows that war with Germany was contemplated from the very start, and the German surmise that the *entente* was aimed at her was correct. It was this surmise that kept Europe in a state of fever till war broke out; and it remains a reflection on the supposed democratic character of our Constitution that, without the least knowledge or approval on the part of the nation, its peace and the peace of Europe should have been thus exposed to the utmost possible hazard by a mere handful of men who derived not the smallest authority to do so from the will or the wish of the people. In the matter of foreign

policy, which touches the general happiness of the community more closely than any other, the Crown still retains relics of supreme power; both Queen Victoria and King Edward regarding the direction of the country's foreign affairs as more than any other the special province of the wisdom of the Sovereign.

The treaty, however, so far as declared, failed to give complete satisfaction in France or in England. The French Chamber did not ratify it till November 13th, and then not till after a debate of three days, when it was carried by a majority of 215 to 37. But the Press showed rifts in the chorus of triumph. Strong opinions were expressed against Spain's having any share of the spoil; the entire possession of Morocco by France, wrote M. Reclus on May 26th, was a question of life or death to France ("*Il s'agit d'être ou de n'être pas, tout simplement*," Schiemann, iv. 181). It was said that, despite the majority in the Chamber, no section of French opinion was in raptures over the treaty, and that England had been the greater gainer by it (*ib.* iv. 29, 293).

But not even in England was satisfaction unqualified. "Never in our recollection," wrote the *Morning Post*, "has Great Britain given away so much for nothing." And Mr. Aflalo, with every competence to judge, had no small public behind him when he predicted that the agreement would "carry with it most fatal consequences to the interests of this country: consequences disastrous strategically, politically, and commercially" (*Truth About Morocco*, 226). The Foreign Office had, he thought, shown itself "hopelessly unequal to the occasion"; there was not in all its archives "a more painful evidence of incompetence than this Anglo-French agreement in so far as it related to Morocco" (*ib.* 262). And as the future of Morocco concerned all the nations of Europe, "why should a Concert of the Nations not have been summoned to settle the whole question?"

This was precisely the question that was asked in Germany, where no criticism of the treaty was expressed

more condemnatory of it than Mr. Aflalo's. But there it was the letting loose of the waters of strife. Especially in Pan-German circles was the treaty regarded as a diplomatic humiliation for Germany. Happily the Chancellor, who always treated the Pan-Germans as a negligible quantity, took a cooler view: which might well have been warmer, had he yet known of the secret clauses that were part of the *entente*. Its object, he argued, was simply to dispose of several Anglo-French disputes; there was no reason to regard it as directed against Germany. In Morocco, German interests were mainly commercial, which Germany must and would protect; but there was no reason to suppose that any foreign Power wished to infringe them (*Reden*, ii. 74). He applied the same cooling reflections to the Russo-Japanese War: no German commercial interests were directly touched by it, and Germany's chief interest lay in preventing the war from developing into a world-war; for which reason her chief object was to remain strictly neutral herself and to keep China neutral also (*ib.* ii. 75–6, April 12).

But the Dual Entente, which M. Poincaré once declared to have been the joint work of M. Delcassé and of King Edward, was of supreme importance to the future of Europe. Professor Schiemann asserts that in France M. Delcassé's Moroccan policy was by general admission inspired by the King (viii. 98, March 11, 1908). Only future time can show whether the policy was a wise one. The *entente* was the first of a series of ill-defined agreements which were not quite alliances but which involved many of their disadvantages. A plausible case for them has been made by Lord Haldane: that as the navies of France and Russia and Italy were all growing, our own interests of security made it urgent that we should establish friendly relations with those countries by removing causes of friction with them, in Newfoundland, in Egypt, in the East, and in the Mediterranean (*Before the War*, 86). But, as Germany's Navy was also growing, why not have applied the same policy to her for the removal of causes of friction? Lord

Haldane claims that at a later date the British Cabinet and himself did strive to establish a similar *entente* of friendship with Germany (*ib.* 103). In 1912 the idea was to extend the friendly relations of the *entente* "so as to bring Germany and Austria-Hungary within them and get rid of anxiety about the balance of power and the growth of armaments" (*ib.* 146). Yet, as the Kaiser and his Ministers knew perfectly well in 1906 that the promise to land 160,000 men on the Continent to aid France against Germany was part of our French *entente*, was it not rather much to expect an offer for an *entente* to be welcomed in Germany which excluded a similar promise of aid to Germany against France? The impossibility of promising military aid to each side against the other must from the first have ruled out of the region of practical politics all question of an *entente* with Germany.

But there was one point on which England and Germany were brought into common accord; for as neutrals in the Russo-Japanese War each Power had the same interests to defend against the claims of the two belligerent Powers. Russia's claim to treat rice and other foodstuffs, coal, and raw material as contraband, and to exercise the right of searching British or German merchantmen for such things, united both Governments in indignation against the stopping of their vessels in the Red Sea and sending them for examination by a Prize Court. The German Social Democratic Party, for all its pacifist professions, favoured a threat of war against Russia when some German vessels were captured by Russian warships, one German paper demanding that the Chancellor, in the case of the steamer *Sontag*, should send the German Fleet to Cronstadt (Bülow, *Reden*, ii. 194, 284). We experienced similar troubles. The British steamer the *Knight Commander* was sunk by the Russian squadron at Vladivostok, because suspected of carrying contraband. Mr. Balfour had to remind British complainants of the abstract right of belligerent cruisers to stop neutral vessels and to examine their papers; we could not object to other Powers exercising a right which we ourselves always enforced.

But fortunately Russia replied in conciliatory terms to complaints about the Vladivostok incident, and the stress of the war disposed her to moderation with all Powers. In September she surrendered her claim to treat rice and foodstuffs as contraband, and, though she did not yield on the point of coal or raw material, she issued instructions for the avoidance of complaints, and British ships ceased to be captured.

But such questions of international law troubled the political mind of our country far less than problems of nearer domestic interest. The fiscal question, the Licensing Bill, and the ordinance for importing Chinese labour into the Transvaal occupied most of the time and thought of the country. The Licensing Bill, to promote temperance by reducing the number of licences, began its stormy career on April 20th ; what, if any, compensation the dispossessed publicans were to receive came to eclipse in interest even the fiscal dispute. A great meeting of 12,000 persons to protest against the Bill on May 28th indicated the strength of feeling roused by the Government's plan ; but though at the end Mr. Asquith proposed the rejection of the measure, it ultimately survived the strife of tongues and became law on August 15th. It finds its place in one of the thinnest Statute Books ever printed, Chapter 28 of the year.

It was, however, the Chinese labour question which more than any other undermined the strength of the Unionist Government. The bright promises of Imperialism had proved fallacious. Lord Milner's sanguine hopes of financial recovery in the Transvaal after the war were disappointed. Agriculture and mining showed but feeble signs of recovery. The natives were far from flocking to the mines. The High Commissioner was thus faced with a deficit of £700,000 in the Transvaal and Orange River budgets, and the question was how to meet it. The answer was, by reducing the South African Constabulary ; by postponing the payment of the 10 millions out of the 30 millions which the Transvaal was to pay for the cost of the war ; but above all by an ordinance for importing labour from China. Lord

Milner asked leave of Mr. Lyttleton, then Colonial Secretary, to agree to these proposals ; he had " no shadow of doubt " about the wisdom of the decision of the Cape Legislative Council to introduce the Chinese in December of the previous year ; and, however undesirable in itself, there was no alternative. And to these arguments Mr. Lyttleton bowed, regardless of the hostility to the scheme manifested in Cape Colony, and to the storm of opposition that arose in England. In vain Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, on March 21st, moved a vote of censure against the Government for not having disallowed the ordinance for Chinese labour ; the Unionists defeated him by 299 to 242. The first batch of Chinamen reached Durban on June 18th—1,049 unhappy men, driven to work for ten hours a day for a shilling. By the end of October there were 13,000 Chinese miners at work, and at the end of the year the number had risen to 20,000 ; but in October the natives at work had reached a record number, and made it look as if after all the natives might have supplied a sufficient number. But a report presented to the Cape Parliament on the treatment of the natives on the Rand mines threw a lurid light on the reluctance of the natives to offer their services ; for it appeared that the wages paid them were less than the wages promised ; that they were obliged to work on Sundays ; that they were flogged when ill (and presumably more so when well) ; that they were subject to ill-treatment from the mine overseers and from the native police ; and that their mortality was excessive. The wonder seemed to be rather that they came at all than that they did not come in swarms.

But, if Imperialism developed with such unpleasant features in South Africa, it was in Russia that it showed itself at its worst. In that country war and revolution were advancing hand in hand. Political murders became so common as scarcely to count as crimes at all ; and among the most striking of such atrocities was the murder of General Bobrikoff, Governor of Finland, as he was entering the Senate, by the son of a Senator, on June 17th, and the bombing of M. Phleve, Minister of the Interior, as he was driving

to the Warsaw Station on July 28th. Murders of this sort came to be regarded as titles to honour, as in the case quoted by Schiemann from a German correspondent in Russia of a large meeting at Kief where officers and others rose from their seats and drank with loud applause (*klatchten Beifall*) in honour of Phleve's murderers (iv. 327): a proceeding followed on many occasions at other banquets in Russia (Dillon's *Eclipse of Russia*, 142). The Japanese War, too, became increasingly unpopular. The Institute of Mining Engineers condemned it on February 23rd as "a policy conceived solely in the interest of a small privileged minority to the detriment of the vast majority of the Russian people" (which might perhaps be said of many other wars besides Russia's); and the Committee of Self-Protection characterized the war as senseless, declared that the claims of Japan were absolutely legitimate, exhorted the public not to send patriotic offerings, which would never reach them, to the the sick and wounded, and advised soldiers to refuse military service. Count Tolstoi issued a striking manifesto against the war in June, and bitterly attacked the Church for giving it that religious character which Churches are so prone to do. The Count's anti-militarist teaching soon bore fruit as the year went on; for in the November mobilization of Reservists thousands of Russians crossed over the Austrian and German frontiers to avoid military service; they fought with the regular forces, destroyed factories and shops, or were forced into the military trains at the point of the bayonet. Russia took to enlisting even convicts for military service. Two months of service relieved a man of a year of penal servitude. Of 7,000 convicts so enrolled at Sakhalin, 5,000 were murderers. Some 15,000 ex-convict volunteers were given the privilege of living in any province they pleased away from the capitals, and were restored to all civil rights except to the holding of property. Of these 15,000 it is said that 5,000 also were murderers: a strange commentary on the traditional theory of some necessary connection between military service and moral character.

Army Reform was naturally raised this year to the front

rank of our political problems, owing to our undertaking to go to the military aid of France in the event of a new Franco-German war. From the date of the *entente* onwards this was the principal concern of our statesmen. The report of the Esher Commission, consisting of Lord Esher, Sir John Fisher, and Sir George Clarke, asked for far-reaching powers over military matters for the Defence Committee and the Army Council. And it further indicated the uneasiness of the time that on May 28th the Report of the Royal Commission on the Militia and Volunteers went so far as to recommend, among other changes, the adoption of conscription on the Continental model; though this most radical proposal of a Conservative Government was at once repudiated by Mr. Arnold Foster, the Secretary of War, on June 2nd. The House of Lords, indeed, favoured the change; but the fact that it would add to our estimates an annual sum of £25,900,000 had a cooling effect on a patriotism that was more ardent than wise (*Ann. Reg.*, 1904, 136, 152, 162). Nevertheless, Imperialism continued to fascinate many minds, and on June 10th there was a Liberal League meeting at the Albert Hall which was addressed by the two most shining exponents of that political creed, Lord Rosebery and Sir Edward Grey. Lord Rosebery tried to elucidate a distinction between an Imperialism that was sane and another Imperialism that was of "a shabby, advertising, and terrifying kind," but it was a distinction with no clear difference, and the real point of the speech was the intimation that, if a Liberal Ministry succeeded to the Unionists, there could be no possibility of even trying to establish a Parliament in Dublin: a thing that hardly needed saying if the Liberal Imperialists came into power. For with Sir William Harcourt's announced retirement from politics on March 1st, followed by his death on October 1st, the old Gladstonian form of Liberalism faded rapidly out of existence.

Thibet was the country that next fell a victim to Imperialist treatment, whether of the "sane" or of the "shabby" kind. Trade was the pretext, fear of Russia

the cause. The whole of the Russian Press without exception remained hostile to our Thibetan expedition (*Schiemann*, iv. 185) which began in 1903 as a peaceful mission under Colonel Younghusband with only an escort sufficient for defence. But it soon became apparent that the Thibetans had no desire to receive this unsolicited mission, and the advance was resisted. Their attack on the invaders was disastrous, their General and 600 men being killed and 200 taken prisoners. Other attacks of the same kind were made, with similar "lessons" for their result. The peaceful mission, therefore, soon developed into a complete expeditionary force with about 1,000 British and 2,000 Native troops, which reached the capital of Lhassa on August 3rd. A treaty was made on September 7th, which condemned Thibet to pay an indemnity of £500,000 (75 lakhs of rupees) in seventy-five annual instalments; the Chumbi Valley to be given over as security. But as the occupation of the Chumbi Valley for seventy-five years would have amounted to an annexation which would have violated the promises made to Russia and China, the indemnity was reduced to 25 lakhs, the payment of which would, it was hoped, admit of the evacuation of the valley in three years. The most interesting clauses of the treaty were some which corresponded closely with Russia's conditions in 1903 in Manchuria: without British consent Thibet was to make no territorial concessions to any foreign Power; to suffer no such Power to intervene in Thibetan affairs, or to send representatives or agents into Thibet; to make no commercial concessions to any such Power without granting similar or equal concessions to Great Britain.

In such style did Imperialism leave its mark on the liberty of a country whose only desire was to be left alone. At a banquet given at the Hotel Cecil on July 13th in Mr. Chamberlain's honour the room was decorated with the inscription of that great statesman's famous words, "Learn to think Imperially." The lesson was well learnt and acted on throughout the year in Thibet, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf, but it chiefly showed itself in an

increased Press hostility to Germany, led by *The Times* (*Schiemann*, iv. 314). Not, of course, that German journalism itself lacked equal vigour in this warfare of the pens; it might need the wisdom of Solomon to apportion the blame fairly between the combatants. But a General Election was rapidly approaching in England, and its verdict meant much for Germany. Yet that country entertained no fears of Chamberlain, should he become the leader of the Unionist Party; it was not thought that he would adopt an attitude of lasting enmity to Germany.

Nevertheless, with all these grasping rivalries raging in the world there were hopeful signs of a striving for a better state of things. The principle of Arbitration made great progress during the year. Most important of the arbitration treaties of the year was the British agreement with Germany, which was signed in July, and which followed the lines of the treaty with France of the preceding year. We entered into similar treaties with Sweden, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands; they were to run for five years and were to refer all disputes that did not affect the vital interests, the independence, or the honour of the respective countries to The Hague Tribunal. At the Guildhall on November 9th, Lord Lansdowne was able to boast that during his time at the Foreign Office he had signed five arbitration treaties; was actually negotiating two more; and had been invited the day before to sign an eighth with the United States. An arbitration treaty was signed with Portugal on November 16th, the day after the arrival of the King and Queen of that country at Windsor, as declared by King Edward VII at the State banquet at St. George's Hall; and a frontier difference between ourselves and Portugal in South-West Africa had been settled by the arbitration of the King of Italy. The Russo-Japanese War undoubtedly quickened the desire for the settlement of international disputes otherwise than by the ordeal of slaughter, but the reservation of "vital interests," independence and honour, from the scope of arbitration left a wide loophole for escape from its protection. The treaty between Holland

and Denmark, however, was wider in character, being quite unlimited; not excluding any sort of quarrel from the scope of arbitration. Switzerland, too, signed treaties with Great Britain, the United States, Italy, Sweden, Norway, France, and Belgium; in the latter treaty not even withdrawing the dangerous exception of "vital interests" from the Court of Arbitration.

Europe, however, was clearly moving towards war, and the movements of the Kaiser troubled the diplomatic world. In March he went in his yacht to the Mediterranean, and met the King of Spain at Vigo. "The kitchen," he wrote to the Czar, "was excellent, the company very merry," on board the *Konig Albert*; Gibraltar was "simply overwhelming," the "grandest thing" he had ever seen. He reached Naples on March 24th, and there met the King of Italy on the 26th, when he quieted him about the troubles in the Balkans, assuring him that nothing would happen there, as "the great Empires were resolved not to stand anything from anybody." Each group of allies was competing keenly for Italy's favour, and soon after the Kaiser's visit President Loubet returned Victor Emmanuel's visit of the previous year by visiting Rome and Naples between April 24th and 30th. From Syracuse the Kaiser telegraphed his condolences to the Czar for the loss of so many Russian lives in the disaster of the *Petropavlovsk*, When Bebel, the Socialist, complained of this as a breach of neutrality against Japan, Count Bülow replied that it was less of a breach of neutrality than Bebel's avowed wish for the defeat of Russia; and he reproved the comic papers of Germany for their having made fun for some years, by malicious articles and caricatures, of the misfortunes that befell a friendly country (*Reden*, ii. 98).

Another letter from the Kaiser to the Czar, dated June 6th, shows which way the wind was blowing. He expressed surprise that the French had not sent their fleet to keep Port Arthur open till the arrival of the Russian Baltic Fleet, but he had come to the conclusion that to prevent any such help being given to Russia by her ally had been precisely

the main object of the Anglo-French agreement; though, had France so helped with her Army or Navy, not a finger would he himself have budged to harm her. As to English efforts to mediate between Russia and Japan, the Kaiser threw cold water on the idea. He told the Czar that such mediation was the object of Sir Charles Hardinge's mission as ambassador to St. Petersburg, despite Russia's strong repudiation of any such proposals; it was "most presuming on England's part, seeing that the war had only just begun; she was afraid for her money, and wanted to get Thibet cheaply"; but he would certainly try to dissuade Uncle Bertie from harassing the Czar with any more such proposals. The first wish for mediation must come from the Czar, and, if it came, he would always be at his cousin's disposal. He wondered what he was going to hear from Uncle Bertie at Kiel; at all events he would keep the Czar informed!

The letter clearly indicates the desire of King Edward to bring the war to a close, as well as the Kaiser's feeling towards his uncle. But the appearances of goodwill were observed, and the Kiel meeting duly took place (June 25th–29th) in the face of the displeasure of the English Press, and especially of *The Times* (*Schiemann*, iv. 183). The King arrived in his yacht, escorted by four cruisers and a flotilla of torpedo-boat destroyers. A gala dinner was given to him by the Kaiser on the *Hohenzollern*; the customary toasts of cordial affection were interchanged, and the customary hopes of the good services of their respective fleets in maintaining the peace of all nations. At this meeting of uncle and nephew no one encouraged Baron d'Estournelles more than the King in the hope of bringing about a *rapprochement* between England and Germany on the basis of mutual concessions; far from watching these endeavours with unfriendly eyes, the King supported them "with sincere cordiality and with his unique tact," nor was the Kaiser hostile (Legge, *More About King Edward*, 46). Of the sincerity of the King's wish for peace not even Count Reventlow thought there was any reason to doubt either then or later (242); the misfortune was that on our side

no corresponding belief of the Kaiser's sincerity was expressed or felt. The next day both monarchs visited the dockyards, and the King dined with the Yacht Club, whilst some 750 of the crews of the British warships were entertained at supper by an equal number of German sailors. On the 28th the King lunched with the Burgomasters and Senators at Homburg; dining later, together with the British captains, with Prince Henry of Prussia, the Kaiser also being present and speaking in terms of great admiration of the British Navy. On the 29th there was a yacht race for a cup given by the King, who, after dining with the Kaiser and the Empress, brought his visit to a close. It was said that the visit was "not primarily, if at all, of a political character," but in any case the Anglo-German treaty of arbitration was signed shortly afterwards on July 12th, nor can it be reasonably doubted that better relations resulted from the meeting.

The visit of the German Fleet to Plymouth was another incident that was also taken in England as proof of the Kaiser's wish to cultivate friendly relations with this country (*Ann. Reg.*, 1904, 291). But it was the Kiel meeting which more especially pacified German hostility; it being there thought that the great emphasis which both monarchs had laid on their wish for peaceable and friendly relations had blunted the edge of Delcassé's anti-German policy as indicated by the Dual Entente (*Schiemann*, iv. 201). But national differences were too fundamental to be for long harmonized by royal courtesies. It was complained on July 20th that *The Times* had never been more poisonously anti-German, and that the *National Review* was as bad; if these papers represented the real mind of the British Government and public, Germany might look any night for an attack by the combined squadrons of England (*ib.* iv. 227). On our side similar fears were cherished, and thus from mutual provocation arose mutual fear, producing a mental atmosphere in which no real friendliness could take root and flourish.

And in the autumn events occurred which had a crushing

effect on the pacifist hopes of the summer. The theory of the *Morning Post* that the Kaiser had from the first pressed the Czar into war with Japan for his cousin's speedier destruction, and that when, on October 10th, 1904, he urged the Czar to send his Black Sea Fleet through the Dardanelles to join his Baltic Fleet, he was hoping to send it to its doom, seems not only inconsistent with the tone of the correspondence, but still more so with the fact that in October began a curious negotiation between the two monarchs for a secret treaty of alliance. The suggestion came from the Czar, apparently by telegram; the Kaiser replying on October 30th that he had at once communicated with his Chancellor, and with him drawn up the three articles of the treaty as the Czar had wished. Fear of a war with England in consequence of the Dogger Bank incident on October 22nd was the probable cause of the Czar's action. The Russian Baltic Fleet, having started on October 13th, had fired into a fleet of Hull trawlers, sunk one, and caused some loss of life. Indignation in England was naturally profound, though Nicholas at once telegraphed his regrets to the King, and promised liberal compensation. But that the excitement in England did not find vent in a great war was attributed by Count Reventlow to the coolness of the King, who had no wish to destroy the bridge to a later *rapprochement* with Russia (239). And a speech by Mr. Balfour on October 28th to the Conservative Conference at Southampton contributed not a little to the calming of the clamour for war. But certain journals sought to make the incident an opportunity for an immediate war, not with Russia, but with Germany. This was notably the case with an article in the *Army and Navy Gazette* on November 12th, called "The Naval Horizon." "It was Germany," said the writer, "that had informed Russia of the probable Japanese attack in the North Sea; and she had kept her fleet in Kiel Harbour in order to take advantage of any untoward circumstance which such misinformation might supply. And was it not rumoured that on October 22nd the Kaiser had ordered the Kiel Canal to be cleared to facilitate

the passage of ships into the North Sea? It was intolerable that a Great Power, like the British Empire, should have to take precautions against even the appearance of such unfriendly acts. Before now we had had to wipe out of existence fleets which we had reason to believe might be used against us; and there were people in England and on the Continent who regarded the German Fleet as the one and only menace to the peace of Europe. The Russian Fleet being now far away, the present moment was particularly opportune for asking that the German Fleet should not be further increased. France and Italy, Austria and Spain, would probably regard with ill-concealed pleasure or open approval any action calculated to remove an element so 'inimicable' to a lasting peace. Might not the greater part of the Mediterranean Fleet be called back to home waters? And, as some people asked what was the use of the British Navy, it might be replied that there was a very obvious use to which it might be put with beneficial results to the cause of civilization and the quiet of the world."

There was no mistaking the purport of this article, which caused immense irritation in Germany. Nor was the idea of crushing the German Fleet before it had grown strong enough to be dangerous confined to the *Army and Navy Gazette*. Count Reventlow makes bold to assert that the question was often discussed in the Cabinet and only dismissed by reason of differences of opinion. The Admiralty and the First Sea Lord, Sir John Fisher, were thought to be of the same mind; and the same view was widely held by the people, in the Press, and in Parliament (254).

Thus it was that a common fear of British action drew Russia and Germany together. The possibility of our assisting Japan caused Russia to look to Germany for aid, as indicated by the subsequently discovered letters of the Kaiser to the Czar. And the Kaiser was not without hope of drawing France also into the alliance: in which circumstances he drew up a treaty, purporting to be "purely defensive" against any aggressor or aggressors upon Russia. He wrote as follows to the Czar:

"If you and I stand shoulder to shoulder, the main result will be that *France must openly and formally join us both*, thereby at last fulfilling her treaty obligations towards Russia which are of highest value to us. . . . This consummation once reached, I expect to be able to maintain peace, and you will be left a free and undisturbed hand to deal with Japan." He enclosed the draft of the three articles as drawn up by himself and the Chancellor without any knowledge of even his Foreign Office, and hoped the Czar would approve of them.

It came to a discussion of the clauses. Again he wrote to the Czar on November 17th: the localization of the war and the avoidance of a European war were their guiding principles; but such a phrase as "in order to localize the Russo-Japanese War" might be taken to mean, if it became known, that the treaty was a menace of provocation against England alone, in case she intervened as an ally of Japan. Of a truth it was so, but every truth was not good to utter. British public opinion was in "a state of nervousness bordering on lunacy," and the words in question might thus urge on the final catastrophe which both of them were trying to avoid or "to postpone at least." Change the words into "in order to ensure the maintenance of the peace in Europe," and even "the irate Jingoes in England" would find it difficult to turn the treaty into a cause for war. The wording of the final clause the Kaiser also wished changed, so that there might be no appearance of aggressive purposes for selfish ends or of any secret clauses; for he was anxious to "avoid letting England take an active part in the war, and if possible to hinder America from joining her." Then the question arose, should France be invited to join before the Russo-German treaty was complete, or afterwards? The Kaiser thought afterwards; but the Czar differed. The Kaiser thought that the Russo-German treaty, once made, would have "a strong attraction on France"; if compelled to choose sides, she would do all she could to restrain England from going to war. Meantime an "excellent expedient to cool British insolence and

overbearing, would be [for the Czar] to make some military demonstration on the Persia-Afghan frontier, where the British think you powerless to appear with troops during this year; even should the forces at your disposal not suffice for a real attack on India itself they would do for Persia—which has no army—and a pressure on the Indian frontier from Persia will do wonders in England and have remarkably quieting influence on the hot-headed Jingoes in London. . . . India's loss is the death stroke to Great Britain." "God grant," concluded the Kaiser, "that we have found the right way to hem in the horrors of war and give His blessing on our plans" (*Letter* 40).

But the monarchs could not agree. The Kaiser wrote again on December 21st: "My opinion about the agreement is still the same; it is impossible to take France into our confidence *before* we two have come to a definite arrangement. Loubet and Delcassé are no doubt experienced statesmen. But they not being Princes or Emperors, I am unable to place them—in a question of confidence like this one—on the same footing as you, my equal, my cousin and friend." Otherwise the Kaiser deemed it better to do nothing, though he hoped they might be useful to one another both for the continuance of the war and in the peace negotiations after it (*Letter* 42). It is clear that the idea of both the Kaiser and of the Czar was to form a triple alliance with France in order to overawe Great Britain from throwing her weight on to the side of Japan. And, if this was their policy in regard to France, it was obviously the policy of King Edward to thwart it.

Amid all these intrigues Count Bülow studied to steer a pacific course. His Chancellorship was one long duel with Bebel, the Socialist leader. When Bebel complained of the widespread hatred and jealousy of Germany that existed abroad, the Count disputed its extent, but added that, if it were true, it was only a reason the more for keeping up German armaments (*Reden*, ii. 100). And they were increased this year on the familiar ground that the best guarantee for peace was a nation in arms. The Chancellor

threw back on Bebel's own party the responsibility for the prevalent bad feeling with England; they it was who spread the notion that the German Fleet was a provocation and menace to England (*ib.* ii. 274–5), whereas the idea that Germany had any notion of destroying England's maritime supremacy was simply laughable; Germany's naval preparations were much smaller than those of other countries; it was absurd to think them directed against England; Germany wished to attack nobody, but only to be strong enough to repel with honour any brutal and unjust attack from any foreign Power (*ib.* ii. 282). Over and over again did the Chancellor insist on the innocent nature of the German Fleet, and fought against the idea, popularized by the Press, of an Anglo-German naval war. What, he asked, would any nation gain in these days by defeating one of its naval rivals? It would only benefit other nations, delighted to step into their places in the markets of the world. And, whichever side came out victorious, it could not take up again the work of peace without the gravest and most lasting injuries. And in such injuries he included not only the actual losses of the war but those consequences of hate and embitterment which often made themselves felt for decades after a war was over and exercised an hypnotic effect on the former adversaries: as witness France and Germany (*ib.* ii. 123–4, December 5, 1904). Words of truly prophetic wisdom, but destined, unfortunately, to be thrown to the winds.

In a conversation that the Chancellor had on November 15th with Mr. J. L. Bashford, an Englishman resident in Berlin, and published in the *Nineteenth Century and After* in December, the same line was taken. The belief in England that Germany was intriguing against her all over the world, or was trying to make mischief between her and France, he altogether denied. He brushed aside some of the fictions of the pro-war propaganda; as, for instance, the story that Germany had been the cause of the Russians firing on the Hull trawlers by "warnings" to the Russian Baltic Fleet: there was not a word of truth in it. Nor was there more

truth in *The Times'* story of October 18th, 1904, about Germany's intervention in Thibet; Germany was as indifferent about Thibet as she was about Manchuria, and any other version was "a pure fabrication." The Chancellor was also put on his defence about Treitschke, whose name served even in those days to foment the spirit of war. What could the Count say for that historian's having written in 1884 that "the reckoning with England had still to come; it would be the longest and most difficult"? His reply was that he could not recall the words in question; but passages favourable to England should be cited as well as unfavourable ones. Nor was Treitschke hostile to England; for Carlyle and other Englishmen were among his friends. Moreover, Treitschke was a poet as well as an historian, and a man of strong passions; if he had used such words, it must have been in a fit of emotion or rage. And if he or others *had* so spoken, it was not the doctrine of the statesmen or educators of Germany. Nor was it true that Bismarck had hated England or cherished designs against England's position in the world. Asked whether he himself did not cordially dislike England, the Chancellor answered that such a charge was not only new to him but wholly incomprehensible. A war between the two countries would be a dire calamity, and for a statesman wilfully to provoke such a war, or so to act as to make it possible or probable, would be an unpardonable crime. German naval policy did not dream of a war with England; its sole aim was the defence of Germany's home waters and of her commercial interests abroad. Such a war as was imagined would completely destroy German trade, and would seriously damage British trade; it would only enable their respective rivals to secure the markets of the world without firing a shot. He ended by emphatically repudiating any dislike personally for England, to say nothing of hatred or hostility (*Nineteenth Century and After*, lvi. 873–81)

All this was a waste of breath unfortunately; for what could assuage the passion of the time? Our *entente* with

France had committed us irrevocably to the French policy of reprisals for 1870, which Gambetta had advised his countrymen not to speak about but never to forget. King Edward's earlier intimacy with Gambetta, and his friendship in later years with Delcassé and Clemenceau, cannot have left him in ignorance of the feelings towards Germany which these men and other political and social leaders represented. It may be true, as Mr. Legge says, that "the peace for which King Edward worked was no peace against Germany; it was peace for all"; but the significance of the encouragement given to the French hopes of *revanche* by the Dual Entente could not be misunderstood, camouflaged though the treaty was as only an "understanding." There could be no co-operation with France on any other terms, however far in the future the issue might lie hidden.

With this sense of danger in the air the German Chancellor replied on December 9th to Volkmar, the Socialist, who questioned the necessity of increasing armaments in so peaceful a state of the world. Count Bülow did not doubt the pacific assurances or desires of the Powers, and thought that the existing alliances conduced to the world's peace; but there were undercurrents tending to war. When one thought of the lust for revenge in France, of the anti-German writings of certain English papers, there was clearly no lack of combustible matter in the world, nor of people ready to blow it into flame. If Germany had been for a generation a bulwark of peace, it was due to her strength; a weak Germany would at once give the rein to warlike desires, and would constitute not only a danger for herself but for that peace of Europe and of the world which they all desired to maintain (*Reden*, ii. 145–6). Nor could the truth of this be denied.

Whilst the seeds of future war were thus being sown under the belief that they were the seeds of peace, several events of interest marked the progress of the world. Perhaps the chief of these was the enormous majority of two and a half millions, by which on November 8th the Presidency of the United States was allotted to Theodore Roosevelt.

The Democrats were hopelessly beaten. The new President stood for "the peace of justice," "the cause of righteousness," and these were to be won by a larger army and navy, and by the policy, if need be, of the "big stick." In Macedonia the insurrection became somewhat modified after the Mürzsteg reforms had been accepted by the Porte on January 10th, owing to the pressure exerted on it by Austria and Russia and England. On September 21st King Peter of Servia was crowned; the officers implicated in the murder of his predecessor were removed from all posts about his person, and Italy and Russia became again represented at the Servian Court. England alone of the Great Powers sent no representative to the coronation, nor was it till August 17, 1906, that Servia was restored to the diplomatic good graces of Great Britain. There was an idea that King Edward looked to Servia as a possible temptation to Austria for severing her alliance with Germany (*Margutti*, 258).

At home the question of Tariff Reform, or of the preferential treatment of imports from the Colonies, tended to overshadow everything else; so much so that for Mr. Chamberlain's meeting at Limehouse on December 15th there were as many as forty thousand applications for tickets. Yet the Colonies contributed a very meagre sum to the cost of the Empire that protected them; Canada paid nothing, and, as was pointed out to Mr. Balfour by a deputation on December 10th, the total contribution of the Colonies to the Imperial naval estimates, amounting to 36 millions, was the paltry sum of £325,000.

The powerful Unionist Government had exhausted its energies, and, but for the closure of debate and the "guillotine," its scanty harvest of legislation would have been scantier still. In the last ten days of the session measures of the most complicated nature were rushed through the House with the briefest possible debate or with none at all. Parliamentary proceedings became a kind of farce, and discredit was cast on the very system of representative assemblies. The success of Parliaments postulates certain

tacit conventions of conduct, such as were forgotten in the French Chamber when on November 4th the deputy Syveton was expelled from the Chamber because in the interval of a sitting he had given General André, Minister of War, so violent a blow on the face as to fell him to the ground (*Ann. Reg.*, 1904, 264). Nor were things much better in Spain. On October 29th the Chamber was the scene of free fights among the members ; one member threatened the President with a cane, and the President broke three bells in his vain attempt to restore order. From 3 p.m. on a Saturday till the morning of Monday debate resolved itself into a tornado of clamour (*ib.* 339).

The contemporary historian could only conclude his narrative of the year 1904 on a very minor key of satisfaction : " There have," he wrote, " been better years than 1904, and many worse ones. It is something to be able to say that the twelve months were not so bad as they might have been, and a good deal better than was at one time feared " (*ib.* 250). But at least the Balfour Government had steered us clear of a war with Russia, and that success, though only a negative title to glory, constituted a very real claim upon our gratitude.

CHAPTER V

1905

MOROCCO DISTURBS EUROPE

The new year began ominously for Russia with the fall of Port Arthur, and the fortune of war continued to reserve all her favours for Japan. And in Russia revolution followed hard on the heels of defeat. The massacres of January 22nd, called "Bloody Sunday," when a vast crowd under Father Gapon marched to the Winter Palace to petition the Czar for reforms, and was fired into with much loss of life, were the prelude to a condition of the wildest anarchy that lasted throughout the year. A sensation was caused when on February 17th the Czar's uncle, the Grand Duke Sergius, was killed at Moscow by a bomb; but what was this single crime amidst the enormous volume of crime that made up the Russian annals of the time? Let it suffice to say that not even in the worst days of the Bolshevist rule nor of the French Revolution was there a more fearful tale to tell of the murders, robberies, and burnings that were committed all over the Russian Empire, and especially in the Baltic provinces.

In vain the Kaiser gave his cousin the Czar most sagacious advice for his political and military guidance, under the guise of Continental opinion; as that Nicholas should have addressed a deputation of the crowd from the balcony of the Winter Palace; that he was held personally and solely responsible for a war that was highly unpopular; that he should personally take over from Kuropatkin the Command-in-Chief and electrify the troops by his personal presence, after the old custom of his ancestors, who used to call the nations to arms before an assembly of his nobles

in the Kremlin at Moscow. Such an act had been expected a year ago; "but the Czar came not. Moscow was left to itself; the 'holy war' eagerly expected was not proclaimed, and there was no call to arms" (*Letter* 45). Soon after the Peace of Portsmouth with Japan had been signed on September 5th, thanks to the intervention of President Roosevelt and to the support of the Kaiser, the Czar signed a Constitution which conceded a Legislative Duma, an extension of the suffrage, and the principle of Ministerial responsibility; and this seemed to the world a great thing, though the peasants went on gaily burning down the houses of the landowners, and believing strangely that in so doing they were carrying out the wishes or the commands of the Czar.

In these conditions Russia's alliance came to be of less value to France; and Germany, had she wished for war, had her eastern neighbour at her mercy. But she had trouble enough in her Polish provinces and in her colonies in South-West and Eastern Africa. The Chancellor's reply to the continued agitation for a Greater Poland was that Germany would never grant independence to Eastern Poland; the experience of a century had proved the unwisdom of concessions to Poland (*Reden*, ii. 149, January 14th). He charged the Poles with having taken the offensive by allowing no community with the German settlers; the only possible policy was to increase the number of the latter (*ib.* ii. 189).

In South-West Africa the Hereros and Witbois continued the rebellion of the previous year, when it was said that the Hereros destroyed in a short time the fruits of the industry of a decade, great cruelties being committed on both sides in accordance with all precedents of African warfare. The insurrection had cost Germany £2,100,000 in 1904; its estimated cost for the current year was over three millions. The Witbois were at last vanquished, but the Hereros were still fighting at the end of 1905, and reinforcements had to be sent from Germany. There was trouble also in East Africa with the Wangonis, whose rebellion was attributed,

among other causes, to the unpaid labour exacted of them by the missionaries (*Ann. Reg.*, 1905, 289).

The Social Democratic Party denounced these proceedings, but the Chancellor insisted that seldom or never had a colonial war been waged with more patient humanity than the Herero war (*Reden*, ii. 269, December 9th). In the subjugation of the lower races by the better armed races of the world it is probable that German Imperialism pleaded a zeal for humanity as fairly as the Imperialism of any other nation. It was in November of this same year that was issued the Commission of Inquiry into the abuses of the Belgian Congo, and it proved up to the hilt the truth of the charges of shocking cruelties alleged by Mr. Morel. And in the French Congo there was the same story of native trouble; the Senegalese troops were "kept in active employment," sometimes against enormous odds; for in some districts the natives "seem to have risen *en masse*" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1905, 441). Nor can one suppose that they rose for the pure fun of being shot down. Even in our own East Africa a military expedition had to march against the Nandi tribe; in November the Nandis sued for peace, the British casualties having been 42 killed and 45 wounded, whilst the Nandis had lost 636 men, and thousands of cattle, sheep, and goats had been captured from them as the spoil of war (*ib.* 432). But it was West Australia that presented the worst case of all. On March 30th a report by the Committee appointed by the Government of that colony to inquire into alleged cruelties on the natives was the subject of a debate in the House of Commons. The cruelties were said to have exceeded those of the Middle Ages. The Colonial Secretary, Mr. Lyttleton, admitted and deplored the facts. Lord Lansdowne, too, expressed the indignation and humiliation with which he had read the report; and on May 9th the Archbishop of Canterbury raised his voice in honourable protest (*ib.* 95, 153). The trouble arose in a curious way. Before the white settlers came, the natives had lived mainly on kangaroos, and, when the settlers destroyed the kangaroos, the natives took to killing and

eating instead the cattle of the settlers. It had become the practice to bring both criminals and the witnesses to the trial chained together in gangs, and if such hardships preceded the trial, it is perhaps unlikely that the penalties which followed it were conspicuous for greater clemency.

On January 4th Professor Schiemann wrote of the Moroccan question as having become "really acute" (v. 6): in which case it can hardly have been the defeat of Russia by Japan at the battle of Mukden in March, depriving France of any help from her ally in an anti-German war, which tempted Germany to raise the Moroccan crisis of the year with a view to a fresh attack on a defenceless France, as suggested by Mr. Ellis Barker in his book on *Modern Germany* (134). It was not this that brought a new Franco-German war within the horizon, but the secret clauses of the Anglo-French Agreement of the previous year. They were the real causes of the Moroccan crisis. The feeling between Germany and ourselves became embittered, and the Press campaign grew worse than ever. Had such papers as *The Times* and the *National Review* desired war, they could hardly have written more effectively to that end. And a speech by Mr. Lee (now Lord Farnham) on February 2nd, on the redistribution of our Navy, made matters worse. It was less necessary, he said, to keep our eyes on France and the Mediterranean than on a possible danger in the North Sea; and the hope expressed, that in case of danger the British fleet would be ready to strike the first blow before the other Power was aware that war was declared, caused such irritation in Germany that the speech had to be explained away (*Reventlow*, 252, 285). In the following year Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, as Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, deemed it prudent to disclaim all idea of such an attack on Germany by sea as had been hinted at by Mr. Lee (*ib.* 296). And, whilst apprehensions of an English invasion were thus raised in Germany, the alarm of a German invasion of our own shores was maintained at full pressure, in the interests of an increased Navy. Nor did the scare suffer much diminution from Mr. Balfour's declaration on March 7th

that, in the opinion of the Defence Committee itself, no invasion was possible in such force as could inflict on us a fatal blow or threaten our independence. On the same day on which this speech was made Sir John Fisher was appointed First Sea Lord with sole responsibility for our naval policy, and with his avowed policy of an immediate destruction of the German Fleet. "Cease building, or I strike," was his advice. But, if invasion was impossible, the ground was cut away from his policy, which was very widely held; and that was perhaps the reason for Mr. Balfour's repetition of his argument on May 11th, in a speech for which his own party never quite forgave him, when he said that the Committee of Defence had consulted all the experts about invasion, and that of these great experts Lord Roberts himself did not think that less than 70,000 men could be employed on such a task, and that it would be a forlorn hope for them to try to take London.

Meantime in home politics the Unionist Government, under the benign leadership of Mr. Balfour, did little but mark time. The Statute Book for this year was even thinner than that for 1904, so small was the legislative harvest. "The lamentable deficiency of Parliament as a legislative machine" began to strike men's minds; for many measures approved of by all parties failed to reach maturity, while the time wasted on them amounted to "a legislative scandal." The urgent necessity for a reform of Parliament itself to meet the needs of the time forced itself on general observation (*Ann. Reg.*, 1905, 203).

But political activity never slackened, and many lost elections indicated the coming of a different Government. In this situation the capture of the control of the future policy of Liberalism became an object to strive for, and accordingly Lord Rosebery was early in the field to make it clear to all and sundry that, if he could help it, there would be no question of Home Rule for Ireland. At the City Liberal Club on March 9th he declared it impossible for any Liberal Government to bring in any Home Rule Bill without a previous appeal to the country; whereupon

Mr. Redmond, the Irish leader, bitterly attacked his lordship, and made it plain that the Irish party would neither support nor keep in office any Liberal Ministry formed on Lord Rosebery's conditions. A few days later, at Esher, Lord Rosebery repeated his declaration and expatiated on the evil of a dual form of government: which drew from Lord Morley the pertinent question whether, if duality of government would prove a curse, our experience of unity of government had ever proved a blessing. So the matter remained undecided. But when, on November 13th, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, at Stirling, propounded the idea of granting Home Rule by instalments, Lord Rosebery again interposed, complaining that his rival had "hoisted once more in its most pronounced form the flag of Irish Home Rule," and refusing "emphatically, explicitly, and once for all" to fight under such a banner.

But if discord thus reigned in the Liberal camp, the Unionist camp was not much happier. Division of opinion on Tariff Reform caused an endless waste of ink and of breath; nor did anyone seem able to reconcile the Prime Minister's views on this perplexing problem with those of Mr. Chamberlain. There was no answer to Lord Spencer's question whether Mr. Chamberlain in this matter was "the opponent, the rival, or the ally of the Prime Minister." And the want of a definite answer was the main reason why the end of the Government preceded the end of the year.

Notwithstanding the recent changes for the improvement of our military system, our militarists remained dissatisfied. Lord Roberts declared in the Lords on July 10th that "our armed forces as a body were as absolutely unfitted and unprepared for war as in 1899-1900." And three days later the Secretary for War referred to Lord Roberts as inspired by the idea that the only true remedy for our military ills was conscription, opposed though he himself was to it as unsuited to our needs. Clearly Mr. Arnold Foster did not recognize that fanciful distinction between universal military training and universal military service by which Lord Roberts hoped to make conscription palatable

to the taste of the British people. But in any case there were so many openings for war that there was abundant reason for getting the guns ready. Macedonia still menaced the peace of Europe, as Lord Lansdowne said on March 28th. King Edward's visit to Vienna in 1903 was thought to be the first step to a more decided British intervention in the matter, and in 1905 Turkish reforms in the Balkans were made an affair of the six Great Powers, and not solely of Austria and Russia. But the Porte remained obdurate against all reforms, nor was it true that this obduracy was due to German promptings; for Germany used all her influence at Constantinople to get the Mürzsteg reform programme adopted (*Paris Correspondent of the "Standard,"* March 11th). But the Sultan was slow to move; even the attempt to blow him up in July with a bomb failed of success; nor was it till November 22nd that the Porte yielded to the importunate demands of the Powers, when they were backed by the demonstration of an international fleet sent to the Piræus; in which Germany, however, took no part.

In all that happened this year Germany saw the finger of King Edward intent on encircling Germany with a ring of potential enemies. The separation of Norway from Sweden, long desired by Norway, converted a united Scandinavia friendly to Germany into two States, of which Sweden was perceptibly weakened by the division, whilst Norway, with its long Atlantic and North Sea coastline, was brought entirely under British influence, and this was attributed to King Edward; the British Press losing no opportunity of creating mistrust of Germany in Norway, on the supposition that the visit of the Kaiser and of German squadrons to Norwegian harbours had in view the use of such harbours in time of war (*Reventlow*, 294).

Baron Eckhardstein has said that "nothing could be more mistaken" than the view that King Edward brought about the encirclement of Germany by his "fanatical hatred of Germany" (54). The King himself had favoured an alliance in 1901, and he explained to Eckhardstein that the

rapprochement with France and Russia was primarily a measure for the cause of peace, though also a hint to Wilhelm and Von Tirpitz not to go too far (60). So without any fanatical hatred of Germany there was clearly in the French *entente* an idea of a threat to her, which naturally confirmed the fear of encirclement.

But it was the Moroccan problem which chiefly brought the spectre of war within the horizon of men's fears or hopes. When the Combes Ministry fell in France on January 18th and was succeeded by that of M. Rouvier, M. Delcassé remained Foreign Secretary. The idea of partitioning Morocco between France and Spain was not an idea of yesterday ; for a rumour of such a scheme had appeared in the *Standard* of December 1903 (*Schiemann*, iii. 383) ; nor was Count Boni de Castellane contradicted when he said in the French Chamber on April 19, 1904, that M. Delcassé had proposed such a scheme to the Sagasta Cabinet in Spain, but, on Sagasta's dying in November 1902, had failed to get the consent of the Silvelas Cabinet which followed, and that thereupon he turned to England for assistance (*ib.* v. 108). Now with Russia rendered powerless as an ally by her war with Japan, and with England attached to the fortunes of France by the Dual Entente, it seemed possible to risk a forward move in Morocco. The French mission to Morocco under St. Réné Taillandier went boldly to work. Five points were submitted for acceptance to the Sultan which threatened to reduce Morocco to the position of Tunis, as a French possession from which other interests than French would be excluded. It was thought inconceivable that the Notables at Fez would suffer the Sultan to accept proposals which would mean the end of him and of his dynasty (*Daily Telegraph*, February 27th ; *Schiemann*, v. 75).

A speech by the Kaiser at Bremen in March had a needlessly disconcerting effect on the world. He pledged himself never to strive for " empty world-dominion," but forecast a " world-wide dominion for the Hohenzollerns . . . to be founded upon conquests gained, not by the sword, but by

the mutual confidence of nations which pressed towards the same goal" ; the time had come for increasing Germany's Navy, her Army being large enough ; "every German warship launched was one guarantee the more for peace on earth," since a stronger Navy would make any alliance with Germany more valuable, whilst it would make her adversaries less ready to quarrel with her. After all, the Kaiser was not singular in looking to increased armaments as the best security of peace. The same thing was said *ad nauseam* in England from a thousand platforms. But a speech by the Kaiser, when he suddenly landed at Tangier on March 31st, caused immense disturbance. The violence of the German Press in reference to the French mission to the Sherifian Court reflected the rising excitement in Germany. The moment seemed to the Chancellor one for decisive action, if France and Germany were not to come to blows, and therefore at his advice, not of his own initiative, the Kaiser went to Tangier (*Deutsche Politik*, 102). The visit, says Bethmann-Hollweg, "was undertaken much against his own will, and only under pressure from his political advisers." The Kaiser was at Tangier for two hours ; he expressed himself as resolved to uphold Germany's commercial interests in Morocco, and to suffer no other Power to intervene between himself and the Sultan of Morocco, the free Sovereign of a free country.

But, if the Chancellor thought thus to avert a war, the Tangier episode was not far from producing one. Both in England and in France the Kaiser's remarks were taken as a threat or a challenge ; and the very next day, April 1st, Count Lalaing, the Belgian Minister in London, reported rumours of an intended exchange of naval visits between the English and French Fleets as a demonstration against Germany's action (*Diplomatic Documents*, 3). On the other hand, M. Delcassé's offer to resign his post of Foreign Minister, though not accepted, indicated the effect of the incident on the French Government. And it was thought in Germany that it put a check on the crusade in England for the immediate destruction of the German Fleet in order to forestall

an invasion. Doubtless the bogey of an invasion had for one motive the gaining of votes for the Unionist Government at the fast approaching General Election; as when at Chichester Lord Edward Talbot predicted that the return of a Liberal Government would almost certainly be followed by a German invasion (*Schiemann*, v. 170). Otherwise it seemed laughable in Germany for the powerful British Fleet to fear an attack from so vastly an inferior fleet as the German, or for the English people to let itself be persuaded that for their future security an attack on the German fleet was desirable (*ib.* v. 320).

On April 6th King Edward left London to join the Queen at Marseilles for a yachting cruise in the Mediterranean. After a night in Paris as the guest of President Loubet, he left Marseilles on April 8th, and on the 29th he was back in Paris. On May 3rd, after a morning at the Salon, he lunched with the Marquis de Breteuil, there meeting his diplomatic colleague, M. Delcassé, with whom he had a long talk after lunch. Like the Kaiser, the King could do nothing that was not of world-significance, and this luncheon shook the nerves of Europe. M. Leghait, the Belgian Minister at Paris, complained of his visiting Paris just then, when the excitement over Tangier was still so great: doubtless the King wished to emphasize the solidarity of France and England; but he "did not content himself with expressing his feelings and his views to M. Delcassé and other French politicians; he took care that the Court in Berlin should know them also, and with this object in view he had a long conversation with the German Ambassador after the dinner at the Elysée; and it seems that he spoke very clearly." But, if the King's visit to Paris was in the nature of a political demonstration, it hardly affected the situation; for within a few weeks, on June 9th, M. Delcassé resigned his office. M. Rouvier openly reproached his Foreign Minister with the dangerous nature of a diplomacy that had nearly brought about a war, and after some hot words M. Delcassé again tendered his resignation, which this time was accepted, M. Rouvier becoming his own Foreign Minister, much to

the easing of the situation. It was in reference to the King's recent visit to Paris that at a dinner given to Mr. Choate, the retiring American Ambassador, that gentleman eulogized the King for his " unceasing instinct for peace," " his perfect genius for conciliation " ; but the secret clauses of the agreements of 1904 were great barriers to peace, nor of their tenor can the King have been in ignorance.

On April 12th Count Bülow put the German case about Morocco in dispatches to German Ambassadors abroad, in view of statements in the French Press that called for correction. He denied that the Anglo-French *entente* of 1904 had ever been notified, either in writing or orally, as it should have been, to the German Government ; its publication in a French official journal was not enough ; M. Delcassé had given no definite information to the German Ambassador, Prince Radolin, at Paris. But on this point it appeared later that the French Minister had on March 23, 1904 communicated the chief points of the coming agreement to the Prince, and sent a report of the conversation to the French Ambassador at Berlin for the information of the German Foreign Office (*Hammann,* 146). In that case the diplomatic informality was less serious than represented by the Chancellor. The latter continued that, as the *status quo* was reserved in the treaty, Germany had not troubled, as she assumed that, if France took any measures affecting the rights of the signatory Powers to the Madrid Convention of 1880, their consent would first be asked. Gradually Germany had become alarmed, and her alarm increased when she learnt that St. Réné Taillandier had openly declared at Fez that he was acting as the mandatory of Europe, and that French journalists quoted France's protectorate over Tunis as a precedent for her treatment of Morocco. As Germany desired no special privileges in the country, nor a special treaty with it, a Conference of all the signatory Powers seemed to her the best means of arriving at a peaceable settlement which would protect the interests of non-French countries from an exclusively French domination (*Reden,* ii. 403–7). And the same idea of a Conference was

proposed in the French Chamber on April 28th by Count Leferronays (*Schiemann*, v. 111).

The Chancellor mistrusted M. Delcassé. The latter's disclaimer of having ordered Taillandier to declare himself the mandatory of Europe seemed to conflict with Taillandier's own pronouncement; and this pronouncement had been confirmed from many other sources and from the Moroccan Sultan himself "with great decisiveness." According to Count Tattenbach, the German representative at Fez, the Frenchman had said on his arrival that France would regard any communication to foreign Powers of Morocco's proposed reforms as an infringement of French interests, since no other Power but France had any right to interfere with Moroccan affairs. Count Bülow described this Delcassan policy as "of a stormy character," and he hoped that M. Rouvier would disapprove of it (*Reden*, ii. 408, May 22nd). And this came to pass; the idea of a Conference growing in favour, despite M. Delcassé's opposition. At the beginning of June the Moroccan Government, possibly under German instigation, invited the signatories of the Madrid Convention to a Conference at Tangier for the discussion of the needed reforms. Germany promptly accepted the invitation, but the Chancellor refused to assent to Rouvier's suggestion of a preliminary discussion of the reforms contemplated. He desired an admission from France that reforms affecting the police and finances of Morocco should be regarded as an international concern, not as a purely French one; and that for trade the principle of the "open door" should be recognized; but in other respects he undertook that Germany would do her best in support of France's wishes. When asked by Rouvier to define the word "international," he defined it, as regarded finance, as a National Bank controlled by representatives of the different Powers, and not solely by a French banking group; as regarded police, as restriction of French control to districts near the Algerian frontier, leaving remoter districts, as on the Atlantic coasts, to the several Powers (*ib.* ii. 412, June 15th).

Delcassé's resignation on June 9th was due to his failure

to obtain the support of his colleagues to oppose the meeting of this Conference. But about his resignation there is some conflict of evidence. Professor Schiemann cites interviews in the *Matin* and *Gaulois* as indicating the absence of any German pressure in the matter; the resignation was due to Rouvier, who at the last hour intervened to stave off the danger of war, and who acted entirely of his own accord; "no German statesman would have allowed himself such an intervention in the internal affairs of another Power" (v. 295, 383). Dr. Dillon's account somewhat differs: Delcassé "was removed by his own colleagues congruously with the demand made by the German emissary, Henckel von Donnersmarck, who visited Paris for that purpose"; and Prince Radolin is said to have reminded Rouvier on June 13th that, failing the Conference, "Germany with all its forces was at the back of Morocco" (*Eclipse of Russia*, 400).

On the same day on which Delcassé resigned Count Bülow was made a Prince. Hope arose even in Berlin of a *rapprochement* between Germany and France; and the Kaiser showed much civility to certain French officers who represented France at the wedding of the Crown Prince. Between the French Premier and the German Ambassador, Prince Radolin, there was much correspondence and discussion concerning an agreement between their respective countries (*Ann. Reg.*, 1905, 265). But for some days the question of a Conference remained unsettled. The English war Press was strong on the side of Delcassé, and the Government on June 15th was all for refusal, but subject to France's also refusing (*ib.* 173). Happily M. Rouvier worked amicably with Prince Bülow, as he wished for an accommodation with Germany; but it was not till July 10th that he was able to announce in the French Chamber that an agreement for a Conference had been reached, of which the terms were to be the sovereignty and independence of the Sultan, the integrity of the Moroccan Empire, and equality of trade between all nations. And on July 12th it was announced that Great Britain also would attend the Conference. So far all seemed well; but another ten weeks were to elapse

before the bases of the Conference were settled. The credit of their settlement is claimed by the Russian Minister, Count Witte, who, returning to Paris from the peace with Japan signed at Portsmouth (U.S.A.) on September 5th and subsequently visiting the Kaiser at his castle at Rominten on September 26th, succeeded in reconciling the French and German Governments ; Rouvier having explained that, unless he did so, there could be no question of floating a Russian loan in France (*Memoirs*, 416–21). When the Count asked the Kaiser to do a favour to the French, " he accorded it with the best grace in the world. And I obtained from him the concession about the Algeçiras Conference which Rouvier had so often asked for in vain. In this way war was averted " (Dillon's *Eclipse of Russia*, 396). But it was not till October 28th that the Sultan of Morocco agreed to the terms of the Conference. Count Witte's story confirms Bethmann-Hollweg's statement, that the Kaiser's " personal influence was strongly exerted for a settlement of the Morocco crisis of 1905," and it justifies Lord Haldane's belief that the Kaiser " most genuinely desired to keep the peace " (*Before the War*, 99).

But were others equally desirous of peace ? Considerable sensation was caused when the *Matin*, on October 6th, 7th, and 8th, published certain articles to the effect that at the Council which ended in his resignation M. Delcassé stated that England had promised to protect France under all circumstances, by mobilizing her fleet, by seizing the Kiel Canal, and by landing 100,000 men in Schleswig-Holstein. The tale was never very definitely denied, and the latest French version of the episode is of much interest. It is to the effect that M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, succeeded in getting Lord Lansdowne to promise to consider the broad lines of a closer attachment on our side to France as against Germany. Proposals going farther than anything involved in the *entente* of 1904 must have been made, for Germany threatened France with a declaration of war if the British proposals were accepted ; whereupon M. Rouvier insisted on their rejection as preferable to

a war, and this led to Delcassé's resignation. Such is the story told by M. André Mevil in the *Echo de Paris* of March 28, 1922; and it shows how far the Unionist Government of that day was prepared to go in an apparently unconditional military support of France in any fresh Franco-German war, and how very near we came to a war with Germany in the year 1905. But Count Reventlow cites no authority for his statement that a promise of such military aid to France was made on the personal initiative of King Edward (279), though of course the King and his Foreign Minister were virtually one.

But the episode, taken as a whole, was so far a signal triumph for German diplomacy, nor did Prince Bülow fail in giving just credit to France, especially to M. Rouvier, for their conciliatory attitude during this stormy passage. In an interview with the French editor of the *Petit Parisien* on October 3rd the Chancellor defended Germany's intervention at a time when France showed not only a wish to isolate Germany but to injure her, although for some time past her desire for better relations with France had been manifested; the French Premier had judged the dispute from the higher point of view, having honestly co-operated to ease the tension between the two countries. The Chancellor disclaimed any justification for the mistrust that had existed between them, and said truly that it rested with the Press of both countries to create such feelings of mutual trust as were honestly wished for by both the French and the German Governments. The future might be faced calmly and joyfully, if only certain Germans and certain Frenchmen would cease to regard themselves as of necessity traditional enemies, and would realize how fruitful for good would be a real and perfect peace between the two nations (*Reden*, ii. 421–2).

The interchange of great naval courtesies between the French and English Fleets, as anticipated on April 1st, duly took place, and were an exhilarating feature of the summer, besides being an indication to Germany of the cordiality of the reinforced harmony between England and France. The

British Atlantic Fleet was entertained at Brest in mid-July, our officers being entertained at lunch by the French President at Paris and by the French Premier on July 14th and 16th respectively. Nor ever was the French genius for hospitality more brightly manifested. And their courtesy was reciprocated the following month by our Government, when on August 7th the French Channel Squadron arrived at Cowes, and the King welcomed Admiral Caillard and his admirals and captains on the royal yacht, and gave a dinner to the principal officers, followed by fireworks and an illumination of both fleets. Next day, August 8th, the King reviewed the squadrons of both nations at Portsmouth, and lunched with Admiral Caillard on board the *Massena*. And then on August 10th the French Admiral and 80 of his officers lunched at the Guildhall. The festivities ended on August 12th, when Admiral Caillard and 130 of his officers were entertained at luncheon in Westminster Hall by 220 members of the two Houses of Parliament, after which there was a procession of carriages, and in the presence of a huge crowd Admiral Caillard and all his officers stood up and saluted the statue of Nelson in Trafalgar Square (*Redesdale*, ii. 764). The speeches at Westminster laid stress on the pacific and non-aggressive nature of the Anglo-French friendship; Mr. Balfour struck a right note in declaring that the time was past when a friendship between two great nations indicated any danger to a third, and that our union with France was a pledge of peace—of peace in the East, of peace in the West, and of peace in the whole world. But unfortunately it was not so, for the whole episode only increased the irritation of the third Power in question, and Germany felt herself, as it were, excluded from the feast of harmony. Mr. Kitchen, the contemporary English chronicler, thus wrote of the situation: "Parallel with the interchange of manifestations of cordial feeling and confidence between Great Britain and France there went on, unfortunately, a considerable amount of exhibition of distrust and irritation between Great Britain and Germany" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1905, 210).

Hence these naval civilities, resulting probably from the April interviews between King Edward and President Loubet, did but little for the pacification of Europe. For Germany took the exhibition of the combined naval strength of the Entente as a menace or warning (*Schiemann*, v. 213); as was shown, not only in Press recriminations, but in such speeches as were made by Bassermann, the National Liberal leader, at Essen in September. English menaces, he said, would not prevent Germany from building the strong fleet she required, nor would the impudent speeches of English admirals or diplomatists have any effect. Peace would be secured by Germany's possessing so strong a fleet that England would hesitate before attacking it; Germany had no desire for a war with England, but only for a pacific development of her foreign commerce; the ships she built were instruments of peace. Professor Schiemann put the case in the same way: Germany, in face of the general enmity to her, could not let her arms rust, and to-day she knew her power, "but certainly we seek for no war, and it seems to us almost laughable to have to say so" (v. 172).

In this feverish atmosphere it added much to the disquiet of the time that no one knew the purport of the meeting on July 24th between the Kaiser and the Czar at Bjorkoe on the Gulf of Finland, following closely on the Brest demonstration. The Kaiser heard that the news of this meeting threw all the people in England and the English Press "into the state of wildest excitement" (*Letter* 60). In vain King Edward tried to discover the meaning of it. The Kaiser, adopting the Czar's own description of his uncle as "the arch-intriguer and mischief-maker" in Europe, writes on September 22nd of the King as complaining at Cowes to a German gentleman, sent expressly by the Kaiser to observe the working of the *entente cordiale*, of his inability to find out anything:

"I can't find out what had been going on at Bjorkoe! Benckendorff knows nothing—*for he always tells me everything*; Copenhagen knows nothing, and even the Emperor's mother—who always lets me know everything—has heard

nothing from her son this time; even Lamsdorff—who is *such a nice man and lets me know all I want to hear*—knows nothing, or at least won't tell! It is very disagreeable!" And, if Eckhardstein is right, it was on hearing of the Bjorkoe treaty between Wilhelm II and Nicholas II, that the King "embarked definitely on encirclement": the very policy which Eckhardstein himself had previously declared to be a German illusion (54, 60).

This intelligence showed, the Kaiser thought, how very wide was the net of secret information that his uncle was casting over Europe and over the Czar; but it was a game in which all the Powers were equally engaged. And now we know at what the Kaiser and the Czar were playing. The secret treaty between them, which had been meditated in 1904, was signed on July 24th, without the knowledge or presence of their respective Foreign Ministers, the pith of which treaty was contained in the first of its four clauses, to the effect that either Empire should give the other the aid of all its military and naval forces in the event of an attack upon it by any third European State (see text in Dillon's *Eclipse of Russia*, 412, or in Isvolsky's *Memoirs*, translated, 54).

It seemed from this that in a new Franco-German war Russia would be bound to fight against France, her own ally; and in this sense the treaty was interpreted by Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, and by Count Witte, Secretary of State, to their great vexation and embarrassment. But Article 4 of the treaty expressly stipulated that it could only come into force after its terms had been communciated to France, and France had been invited to join as an ally; and this was an impossible contingency, for how could France have allied herself with two Powers whose agreement presupposed a joint attack upon her? (*Isvolsky*, 60). In any case the inconsistency of the treaty with the existing one with France was represented to the Czar, and though the Kaiser contended that the two treaties could not collide so long as the Franco-Russian alliance was not directed against Germany, Count Lamsdorff

eventually succeeded in prevailing on the German Foreign Office to annul the secret treaty, to the great annoyance of the Kaiser (*Dillon*, 364 ; *Isvolsky*, 66).

But though the Kaiser's scheme thus failed of result, his aim was undoubtedly the avoidance of war. He had long nursed the idea of a League of Federation of the States of Europe for the preservation of the world's peace. " I want," he once said to Count Witte, " to do away with wars between European States, and I think I see my way " (*Dillon*, 343). He thought that by such an association of States the European State system might count on a life of thousands of years, whereas, if we went on snarling and biting as at present, nothing could arrest the process of decay, and Europe would die as Egypt and Assyria and Rome had died in the past. No one ever put the case for a League of Nations against militarism better than this supposed prince of militarists : " What we are aiming at is the establishment of a political syndicate which is to harness all the social and political forces of the old Continent, and to use them to keep the machine of general government moving for the welfare of all, while leaving room enough for the play of divergent forces and the pursuit of divergent interests " (*ib.* 396).

As tending to this end the Kaiser thought highly of his secret treaty, writing thus to Nicholas II on July 27th : " The 24th of July is a cornerstone in European politics and turns over a new leaf in the history of the world ; which will be a chapter of peace and goodwill among the Great Powers of the European Continent, respecting each other in friendship, confidence, and in pursuing the general policy on the lines of a community of interests " (*Letter* 48). This was to be effected by a union of the Dual Alliance (France and Russia) with the Triple Alliance, thus forming a Quintuple Alliance, to which the smaller nations, like Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, would be drawn in, and perhaps ultimately also Japan ; and this would " cool down English self-assertion and impertinence," as Japan too was England's ally. In this manner " all unruly neighbours "

might be kept in order, and "peace be imposed even by force, if there should be a Power hair-brained enough to wish to disturb it." The Kaiser dreamt of a great "Continental Combine," to counteract the disturbance of the political balance by the recently renewed treaty between England and Japan. This Combine was "the only manner to effectively block the way to the whole world becoming John Bull's property, which he exploits to his heart's content, after having, by lies and intrigues without end, set the rest of the civilized nations by each other's ears for his own personal benefit" (*Letter* 51, September 26, 1905). It was unfortunate both for the Kaiser's own hopes of peace and for the world's welfare that he held these views about the country of his uncle. But each, in fact, had come to regard the country of the other as the chief menace to the peace of the world; and herein lay the great danger of the time.

Clearly, then, the idea both of the Kaiser and of the Czar at this juncture was to isolate England by a ring of alliances corresponding precisely to the English idea of isolating Germany by the same method; and equally clearly the feelings of Nicholas II towards King Edward tallied with those of Wilhelm II. But at this very time came a bid from our side for an alliance with Russia. It came in the form of a projected agreement between England and Russia presented to Count Witte at Paris after his return from Portsmouth (U.S.A.), and purporting to have the approval of the King and of our Foreign Office. An invitation to the Count to visit King Edward in London had to be refused owing to a failure to obtain the Czar's permission. The proposals concerned agreements touching the East, Thibet, Persia, and Afghanistan; but the Count (as he shortly became), from fear that an agreement with England would provoke the jealousy of Germany, rejected it, and it was his opposition which postponed any such agreement till 1907 (*Isvolsky*, 433). When asked his opinion, the Count replied that, whilst the provisions did credit to "their illustrious author," "he was opposed to alliances," though not to a close working understanding with England: "No

political partnerships. I cannot second any effort to bring them about. On principle I will discountenance them all." "The alliance with France was a necessity, and for the time being no other alliance is." "When King Edward received this answer he misunderstood it, as the Count feared that he would. He did not believe in my friendly sentiments towards his country" (*Dillon*, 350–3). It is clear from this story that an *entente* with Russia was already part of the King's policy against Germany.

But however opposed to alliances in general Count Witte may have been, he seems to have been strong for the Kaiser's scheme of an alliance between Russia and Germany and France, and he was convinced of his ability to bring this about if appointed Ambassador to Paris. But there was flagrant disagreement in Russia as to her wisest foreign policy, and Alexander Isvolsky, Russian Ambassador to Copenhagen from 1903 to 1906, and Russian Foreign Minister from May 1905 to 1910, was the soul of the party that strove for the opposite combination between Russia and France and England. He was among the chief founders of this Triple Entente. He tells us that it was during one of King Edward's visits to Copenhagen that he availed himself of the opportunity, in long interviews with the King, of establishing the bases of the agreement of 1907 between England and Russia (*Memoirs*, 19, 20). It was mainly the opposition of Count Witte to their anti-German policy that postponed for two years our more definite commitment to the ambitions of Russia's foreign policy.

It followed from these intrigues of barely concealed hostility that the personal relations between King Edward and his nephew grew steadily worse. On August 22nd the Kaiser was displeased with his uncle for omitting to visit him on the way to Ischl, after letting his Press first launch the idea of such a visit, and then suddenly declaring that the German Foreign Office had started it: "the finest lie I ever came across," he wrote. The fact, or the story, was that, when the King had arrived at Marienbad, a

dispatch was published by Lord Knollys, his secretary and companion, to say that on his way to Marienbad the King had neither wished for any conversation with his nephew nor had any intention of having such ; and this was taken in Germany, not only as an act of discourtesy, but as a political demonstration for the satisfaction of France. From this time forward the King was thought to show less desire to conceal his anti-German bias or his personal antagonism to the Kaiser (*Reventlow*, 277).

The projected visit of the British Fleet for manœuvres in the Baltic, the first such visit since the Crimean War, was ascribed by Count Reventlow to the personal initiative of the King (*ib.* 277). Some alarm was manifested in Germany, and two unimportant newspapers suggested that the *riverain* States should prohibit foreign fleets from entering the Baltic. Professor Schiemann deprecated such alarm as laughable (v. 230, August 2nd), as did also the *Kölnische Zeitung* of July 30th ; but the excitement shown by the English Press struck the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin as " scarcely comprehensible." The Kaiser, on the other hand, rejoiced at the approaching visit as affording a good object-lesson to his own people on the necessity of that strong German Fleet which he so ardently desired to have. On August 24th he wrote : " I have ordered my fleet to shadow the British, and when they have anchored, to lay themselves near the British Fleet, to give them a dinner and make them as drunk as possible, to find out what they are about, and then sail off again." But the cruise passed off without any unpleasantness. The Kaiser ordered the first and second German squadrons to interrupt their manœuvres in order to greet the British ships, and a banquet was given on August 28th, at which Admiral Wilson warmly thanked the Kaiser for the graceful compliment with which he had honoured King Edward. Nor could anything have exceeded the friendly hospitality which the municipalities of the German ports extended to the British sailors. On September 26th the Kaiser was able to write that the visit of the British Fleet at Swinemünde and Danzig had gone off " without collision,"

and that the German public, if not enthusiastic, had behaved civilly and hospitably (*Letter* 51).

The Kaiser's hope of detaching Japan from the English connection was a remote one; for this year saw the link still further tightened. On June 27th the Japanese Prince and Princess Arisugava were entertained at a garden party given in their honour at the Royal Botanical Gardens, and the Prince was made a Grand Commander of the Bath. When they left England on July 11th the Prince, in a farewell speech, grew emotional on the warmth of feeling that connected England with Japan. This warmth of feeling was shown in the new treaty signed on August 12th, and made public on September 27th. It was an extension of the treaty of 1902, in that it obliged either ally to assist the other if attacked, and to make war in common. It was to last for ten years, and its objects were declared to be the defence of the special interests of each country in East Asia and India, the maintenance of peace in those regions, of the independence and integrity of China, and of the principle of the "open door" for trade. But as Russia's defeat by Japan had made such a treaty with Japan needless as a defence against Russia, Lord Lansdowne could say with obvious truth that the treaty was not directed against Russia; from which it was argued in Germany that, if not directed against Russia, it could only be directed against herself (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 9, September 30th). But Prince Bülow took the treaty with his wise and habitual coolness. Its wording was in nowise contrary to German interests: "We have in East China never striven for anything but the 'open door' for our commerce . . . and therefore for peace in China, and for her integrity and independence" (*Reden*, i. 253). And Russia persisted in her resentment in spite of Sir Charles Hardinge's assurances of the purely defensive and pacific intentions of the treaty. Count Lamsdorff only replied that no one with whom he had discussed the matter, least of all the Czar, "doubted for one moment that it was directed against Russia." So Lord Lansdowne, on November 6th, at the Junior Constitutional Club, repeated

the defence of the treaty as being purely pacific in purpose and as free from any secret clauses (such as he knew there were in our *entente* with France). The time, he said, had passed for regarding alliances as entanglements or for a policy of isolation (such as Gladstone had pursued), and he repudiated the idea that the *entente* between Great Britain and France meant estrangement with any other Power or Powers. On the Foreign Office vote on August 9th Lord Lansdowne's foreign policy was approved of, and the probability was unfortunately indicated that, in the event of a Liberal Government following the Unionist, there would be no departure from the Imperialist line of its predecessor. The way was thus prepared for the succession of Sir E. Grey to Lord Lansdowne, the people having no voice at all in such matters.

Meanwhile Germany complained of continual baiting (*Verhetzungen*) by the British Press. Growing hostility towards Germany explained our growing friendship for Russia. Baron Greindl, Belgian Minister at Berlin, thus wrote on September 30th : " The general tone of the Press campaign carried on in England shows that an understanding with Russia is not desired there because it might improve the political situation, but solely out of hostility towards Germany. It is to be feared that the King of England shares this feeling. Recently I had the honour of writing to you that his relations with the Emperor were anything but friendly. I have now heard from a reliable source that His Majesty a short time ago expressed views in the course of a private conversation which form an absolute contrast to the peaceful sentiments hitherto attributed to him."

The Pan-Germans, like the Chauvinists of other countries, continued to say and write many foolish things ; but the scare of invasion in England had other causes. The German Government disclaimed all sympathy with the extravagant aims of the Pan-Germans ; as when the Secretary for the Navy protested against the identification of the Government with the programme of the Navy League, or when in May the Kaiser, in disapproval of its Chauvinist utterances,

sent a telegram to its President so strongly worded as to cause General Menges and General Keim to retire from the Presidential Board (*Ann. Reg.*, 1905, 286). But the Kaiser continued to be the target of endless false legends; to the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Journal des Débats* was attributed the authorship of three of such legends: as that eight years earlier he had promised Nicholas II his aid against any enemy, and then left him in the lurch with Japan; that he had induced Russia to occupy Manchuria and Port Arthur; and that he had been the author of the Boer War (*Schiemann*, v. 234). And among these legends was one to the effect that at the end of 1904 Germany had been on the point of declaring war against England and for this purpose had mobilized her fleet, owing to a conflict between the Kaiser and King Edward. Prince Bülow attributed this story to the Socialist paper *Vorwärts* of August 12th, 1905, but he declared it untrue that Germany had ever acted with aggressive plans against us; untrue that she had ever been on the point of declaring war upon us; untrue that she had mobilized her fleet against us; untrue that Germany had irritated or provoked us. Above all, he deprecated the attempt made to represent the Kaiser as a disturber of the peace, who for the last eighteen years had given so many proofs of his love for it (*Reden*, ii. 278, December 14, 1905).

But it really seemed at the beginning of October as if the dove of peace was about to descend upon our agitated globe. In Germany it was fondly imagined that the agreement about the Moroccan Conference had put a new face on things; that it had shipwrecked the policy of the *National Review*, and shattered beyond recovery the hope of an Anglo-French-Russian combination against Germany (*Schiemann*, v. 278). Comfort also was derived from Lord Percy's disclaimer on August 9th of the Fisherian policy of destroying the German Fleet before it grew stronger, and from similar voices raised in our Press, though in this same month the *Morning Post* fell into line with the *National Review*, which had adopted the Pan-German scare as its special province

(*ib.* v. 253). Accordingly, in an interview with the editor of the *Temps* on October 3rd, the German Chancellor indulged in hopeful anticipations of the future. He regarded the agreement about the Conference as a happy thing for both France and Germany; he thought it would do more to unite than to separate them, and he hoped that the good understanding thus established would continue at and after the Conference; but the French people must be got to understand that the time was past for their policy of seeking to isolate Germany (*Reden*, ii. 423).

Relations between France and Germany thus reached their highest water-mark, thanks to their skilful handling by M. Rouvier on the one hand and by Prince Bülow on the other. The speech by the former before the Chamber on December 16th put the whole matter in a reasonable light: for sixty years the French colony of Algeria, with its 700,000 white colonists in the midst of six million natives, had been exposed to much trouble from the disorders of Morocco. Rebel refugees had trespassed over the frontiers, not only in bands of marauders, but in hordes of several thousands, and France's necessity of ending this anarchy was generally recognized. Then Germany intervened, claiming not only to be informed of the measures proposed, but to be consulted about them, and this had brought about the approaching Conference. In a spirit of compromise France had agreed; but in her proposals to the Sultan there was nothing analogous to the system of government in Tunis, nor was there any claim of a mandate from Europe. At the Conference the rights of each Power in Morocco would not be contested; each Power would have the benefit of its separate treaties with Morocco; the interest of each Power would be respected. But the special rights and interests of France as a Mussalman Power in North Africa would be upheld, though such rights of France injured those of no other Power, and indeed guaranteed their preservation.

In his interview of October 3rd with the editor of the *Temps*, Prince Bülow touched on some points which threw

light on the position of politics at the close of 1905. He dismissed as ungrounded the French apprehension of Germany's drawing France into an anti-English policy, using as a lever Germany's *rapprochement* with Russia. Friendship between Germany and Russia was natural and traditional: such a friendship should be as inoffensive to France as that of France and Russia was to Germany. A double system of alliances best secured the balance of Europe, with freedom of outside friendships for its members, as of France with Italy or of Germany with Russia. With France there was no point in Africa or Asia where her colonial interests conflicted with those of Germany, and so long as French colonial policy respected Germany's growing commercial interests and honour, not only would Germany not stand in France's way, but she would support her in case of need both in Morocco and elsewhere. As to England, some people talked of an Anglo-German war as inevitable, but it was silliness to talk of any war as inevitable. The mutual injury the two countries would inflict on one another would restrain them from any such attempt. And despite the violent Press polemic in either country and the public nervousness, the Governments in London and Berlin were too conscious of their responsibility to be influenced by them. The prejudices of the two countries would disappear by degrees, and France, whose own case showed the possibility of friendship with England, might help towards their removal (*ib.* ii. 424). Finally, there was nothing German public opinion would welcome more than confidence between Germany and France, as soon as it was assured that there was no longer any thought in Paris of isolating Germany.

But unhappily that thought was far from extinct; and before the month was out the Belgian Minister at Paris (October 24th) thought that economic and commercial rivalries might cause war to break out at any time. At a gala dinner on October 26th, after the unveiling at Berlin of a statue to Count Moltke, the Kaiser, in allusion to the position of Germany, exclaimed in a toast to her future and her present, "Let our powder be dry, our swords sharp,

our aim clear, our strength intact"; and great irritation was produced by so natural a recognition of the facts of the time. On November 8th Professor Schiemann wrote: "The system of Delcassé works further, and the dangers connected with it can in nowise be regarded as cleared away" (v. 334). English diplomacy was still strong for his policy, and the Kaiser believed its first object to be the isolation of Germany. And if the Kaiser's speech had been irritating to us, no less so to Germany were the speeches of Lord Lansdowne at the Constitutional Club, and of Mr. Balfour at the Mansion House, with their veiled allusions to Germany as dangerous to the peace of the world. Lord Lansdowne played to the gallery by remarking on the hindrances met by us in various parts of the world by certain rivalries which could profit no one unless perhaps some wily potentate who knew how to profit by them; Mr. Balfour, by expressing his disbelief of any future war unless it were caused by nations or potentates who tried to realize their dreams of national expansion by treading the rights of their neighbours underfoot (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 13).

The Chancellor had to regret that Germany had to reckon with a deep antipathy (*Abneigung*) in English opinion for his country, but he welcomed recent endeavours in serious English circles to resist this dangerous tendency; for the relations of Governments, however mutually pacific, did not exhaust the policy of countries, and the time had come when, as Moltke had anticipated, the chief danger came from the passions of populations rather than from their Cabinets (*Reden*, ii. 251). The frequent recurrence of this idea by the Chancellor shows how sensible he was of this great fundamental truth of modern politics, that the peace of the world lies at the mercy of popular emotions easily whipped up to a state of white heat by the daily newspaper for financial or political purposes: a danger which exists no less under democratic Governments than it does under Kings. Never was this fact more obvious than in 1905. Baron Richthofen, the German Foreign Minister, whilst acquitting the Balfour Government of any precon-

ceived plan for a breach with Germany, attributed its attitude to "excessive flexibility to the demands of a certain section of the Press," which the Cabinet found itself incapable of controlling (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 14). To avert the evil consequences likely to arise from the situation thus brought about, the Anglo-German Friendship Committee was founded in November by Lord Avebury, Lord Courtney, and other pacifists; and their laudable efforts for peace and goodwill met with a hearty response from a meeting held in Berlin on December 20th, which declared that the artificially created antagonism between the two nations had taken no root in Germany, and that Germany was ever ready to take and hold the proferred hand of friendship (*Schiemann*, v. 381). But all such pacifist efforts were puny and futile against the wild and swollen forces of Imperialism and Chauvinism triumphantly created by the Press, and rampant over the world.

Accordingly, when the new Liberal Cabinet was being constructed in November by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, in anticipation of Mr. Balfour's tardy resignation of office on December 4th, the admission of four Vice-Presidents of the Liberal League into the Ministry indicated the unlikelihood of much modification of Imperialism in the foreign counsels of the nation. In the natural order of promotion Sir E. Grey was substituted for Lord Lansdowne at the Foreign Office, but to many it seemed but the change of one pea for another; nor was it likely that our anti-German policy would have been allowed to suffer by a surrender of the Foreign Office to a Liberal of Gladstonian ideas. Sir Edward, the story goes, refused at first to join the new Cabinet unless Sir Henry went to the Lords, and only withdrew his objection on condition that he should have absolutely his own way in foreign affairs (Blunt's *Diaries*, ii. 210). It was a thousand pities, comments Blunt, that "Bannerman missed his opportunity of getting rid of Grey altogether when it was offered." On December 21st, at the Albert Hall, the new Prime Minister advocated the cultivation of better relations with Germany, but the Algeciras Conference

was about to meet, and in the coming struggle of the nations there preparing to wrestle with one another, better relations with Germany were hardly possible so long as our policy bound us to an unconditional support of France, and public opinion followed blindly the lead of *The Times*. Its chief proprietor had been made Sir Alfred Harmsworth in 1904, and in 1905 was created Lord Northcliffe. The Belgian Minister in London, Count Lalaing, writing to M. Davignon, the Belgian Foreign Minister, on May 24, 1907, wrote as follows in reference to Lord Northcliffe's journalistic activities: "A certain category of the Press, known here as the Yellow Press, is to a large extent responsible for the hostility which is observable between the two countries (England and Germany). What, indeed, can be expected from a journalist like Mr. Harmsworth, proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Express*, *Evening News*, and *Weekly Dispatch*, who, in an interview which he has granted to the *Matin*, says: 'Yes, we detest the Germans cordially. They make themselves odious to the whole of Europe. I will not allow my paper (*The Times*) to publish anything which might in any way hurt the feelings of the French, but I would not like to print anything which might be agreeable to the Germans.' Journalists of this stamp, publishers of cheap and widely read newspapers, are able to poison at pleasure the mind of an entire nation. It is evident that official circles in England are pursuing in silence a hostile policy which aims at the isolation of Germany, and that King Edward has not disdained to place his personal influence in the service of this idea" (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 30). In such service, of course, there was nothing like the help of *The Times*; and how could gratitude have failed for its assiduous sustenance of the pro-war propaganda in the years before the war? Princess Blücher relates an incident which occurred at Berlin on October 23, 1915, when the war was raging, and which well illustrates the feeling held in Germany regarding the connection of *The Times* with the war. Herr Jägow, the German Foreign Minister, turning suddenly to her at dinner, exclaimed:

"But is there nobody who will shoot Lord Northcliffe? He is his own country's worst enemy as well as ours. And he is more answerable for all this bloodshed and carnage than any other single individual throughout the world" (*English Wife in Berlin*, 81). Nor was such an opinion merely German; for in 1920 an English anonymous writer leant to the same view, writing of Lord Northcliffe: "Whether he may not be charged in some measure at least with the guilt of the war, whether he is not responsible for the great bitterness which characterized Europe during the last twenty years, is a question that must be left to the historian" (*Mirrors of Downing Street*, 62). And what historian has any doubt of it?

There was, however, one important respect in which the new Liberal Government was able to reverse the policy of its Imperialist predecessor. There was to be no more Chinese labour in the Transvaal. Lord Milner, whose opposition to the ordinance for its introduction would, it was thought, have been effective in preventing it, retired from Africa in April, being succeeded by Lord Selborne. At the time of the change there were 34,315 Chinese on the Rand; and at the end of July they had increased to 43,141, and great disorders and robberies had made their presence less and less desirable. Nothing gave more general satisfaction in the country than the preliminary steps taken before the year was out for the removal from the Transvaal of this last remnant of the Milnerian administration. The last Chinamen left the Rand on February 28, 1910 (*Ann. Reg. Chronicle*, 2).

CHAPTER VI

1906

THE ALGEÇIRAS CONFERENCE

The General Election, which lasted from January 13th to February 13th, brought Mr. Balfour's long-tottering Unionist Government to an end by a return of 513 Progressive members to Parliament against 157 on the Tory side. If this meant anything at all, it indicated the desire of the country for an anti-militarist policy and for a reduction of armaments. But no sooner had the new Parliament met than the defeated Opposition found consolation for the verdict of the polls by the promise of the new Government to continue the foreign policy of its predecessor—an attitude probably imposed on the new Liberal Government at or before its formation. On October 20, 1905, when as yet Sir E. Grey was only the prospective Foreign Secretary of a probable Liberal Cabinet, he had said in the City that, if there was a desire in Germany for improved relations with this country, such a desire would encounter no opposition from our side, but subject to the clear understanding that nothing we did in that direction was in any way to impair our existing good relations with France. "In other words, it must, in my opinion," he said, "be a condition of any improvement in the public relations between Germany and ourselves that the relations of Germany and France in all matters which come under the French agreement should be fair and good also" (*The Times*, October 21, 1905). Count Reventlow says that he made a similar statement on becoming Foreign Secretary early in January 1906 (276). This declaration was interpreted in Germany as an intimation that at the coming international Conference she must con-

form to the wishes of France or forfeit all hope of the diplomatic favour of England (*ib.* 276). It seemed to her that she was expected to enter the Conference with her hands tied beforehand. On the opening of Parliament on February 19th Mr. Chamberlain welcomed the Government's assurance of continuing the foreign policy of its defeated predecessor; but neither he nor the country knew the real secret facts of the case, the scheme for partitioning Morocco between France and Spain, and our commitment to support France with military aid against Germany. Had these conditions been known, it may be doubted whether the country would not have deemed the reversal of the Tory foreign policy better than its continuity.

In the same pursuit of the fetish of continuity the new naval estimates "adhered strictly" to the Unionist programme; and especially was the selection of Mr. Haldane as Secretary for War significant of that intended increase and reorganization of the Army which was essential if we were called upon to supply France with the promised Expeditionary Force in a possible war with Germany. The new War Secretary, forecasting the Army reforms of the next year, and responsive to promptings from other sources than the electorate, followed Lord Roberts implicitly in his policy of turning the nation into an army. As he said at Newcastle and elsewhere in the autumn, what he strove for was "to popularize the conception of a Nation in Arms" (*Ann Reg.*, 1906, 214).

Thus the infusion of Liberal Imperialism in the new Government rendered it impotent for pacific ends. Liberal and pacifist hopes hardly survived the election, and therefore no amelioration of our relations with Germany ensued. German hopes derived from our change of Government were as much disappointed as our own. The view there taken was that Campbell-Bannerman, personally disposed though he was to a more friendly relationship, derived no support from public opinion, nor from the chief members of the Cabinet, and still less from the King; and that the latter, with his secretary, Sir Charles Hardinge, Sir E. Grey and

others, continued firmly on their course of animosity against Germany (*Reventlow*, 288). The destinies of the country passed entirely into the hands of the Liberal Imperialists, who were indistinguishable in everything that mattered from the leaders whom the country had rejected and from whose dominion it wished to escape. Of such value is our vaunted democracy!

Responsive to the wishes of our War Secretary, the chief feature of the year was the successful militarization of the country for the war it both portended and promoted. There was the Army Order of September 13th, which created a General Staff, responsible for the training and organization of the Auxiliary and Regular forces, in accordance with the advice of the Esher Commission; there was the great encouragement given to military drill and rifle practice in our schools; there was the *Spectator's* experiment of keeping working-class lads of about nineteen embodied for military training in camp for six months. Neither by the King nor by his Ministers does the danger seem to have been foreseen of the probable ultimate consequence of the excessive cultivation of a Chauvinistic spirit in the country.

And few things showed the militarist drift of opinion this year better than the episode of the glorification of Lord Milner, deservedly illustrious though he was for so many signal services to the State. Tales of the floggings of Chinese labourers in the South African goldmines had aroused great and just indignation in the more humane sections of English public opinion, and on February 26th Lord Milner frankly admitted that as High Commissioner he had sanctioned such corporal punishment, though under the impression that it only amounted to a light caning and was only administered in cases of violence and disturbance. He thought, in the light of subsequent events, that he had acted wrongly; and on the strength of this admission a vote of censure against him was moved on March 21st, when even Mr. Chamberlain's powerful defence availed nothing against the argument of Mr. Churchill, Under-Secretary for the Colonies, that this illegal flogging had been in

practice in the mines during all the time that it had been denied in Parliament, and that Lord Milner had been beyond dispute guilty of a flagrant dereliction of duty; with the result that, though the resolution was negatived, the sense of the House was shown in the carrying of the Government's amendment by 355 to 135, which substituted an expression of displeasure for an actual censure on the journals of the House. Thereupon the friends of strong government rose in their wrath. On March 29th Lord Halifax, in the Lords, moved for an Address to Lord Milner expressive of gratitude for his services in South Africa and the Empire, and this Address was presented on July 31st with some 370,000 signatures appended. And on Empire Day, May 24th, a grand dinner was given to Lord Milner at the Hotel Cecil in honour of the statesman from whose diplomacy it had resulted that the two independent Republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, had been forced after a terrible war into the all-encompassing embrace of the British Empire. Nevertheless the fact remained that a vast host of Englishmen, whose names figured neither in the Address nor at the dinner, took the view about the South African War, as Sir Edward Clarke expressed it on October 19, 1899 (though himself of the same political camp as Lord Milner), that that "lamentable war was absolutely unnecessary"; or, as Mr. Stead described it, as "an outrage upon Christianity and humanity," which had been "forced upon the Boers by a policy which it was difficult to characterize in Parliamentary terms." But why, after President Kruger had reduced the number of years necessary to entitle a foreigner to a vote down to five years, which was all that was originally asked for, the offer was not accepted but made the basis for further demands, remains a mystery which received no elucidation from the oratory of the Hotel Cecil.

But, a Liberal Government being now in power, it was resolved so far as possible to redress the wrongs of the past, and to remove that racial antagonism between British and Dutch which had so lately drenched South Africa with blood. The new Constitution for the Transvaal, drafted

by Mr. Asquith and introduced on July 31st to Parliament, bestowed equal rights of citizenship on Boer and Briton alike. So bold an experiment was to find its reward in later years, and its success enhances the regret that must be felt that so easy a settlement should not have preceded instead of having followed so miserable and ruinous a war. But the friends of the war were loud in predictions of consequent danger. Lord Milner strongly denounced the Government for so hasty a reversal of the policy of its predecessors: it was "a great and capital error . . . mischief had been done which could never be retrieved" (*National Review*, xlviii. 5); and the Prime Minister declared that in the whole of his Parliamentary career he had never heard so unworthy a speech as that in which Mr. Balfour had criticized the new departure as "a dangerous, audacious and reckless experiment."

Colonial troubles soon arose. From the beginning of the year there were rumours of unrest in Natal. To stimulate recruiting for the mines a poll tax had been imposed or increased, and the natives nourished an absurd dislike of being taxed for the pleasure of inclusion in the British Empire. They also complained of their own earnings being reduced by the importation of Chinese labour, and of their treatment being worse than it had been formerly. These explanations seem simpler than the supposition of a plot to drive all whites from South Africa in accordance with the teaching of a mysterious new cult called Ethiopianism. In any case, in February they rose—just as the Hereros had risen against the Germans—and killed some of the white police force, for which twelve out of twenty-one prisoners concerned in the murder were sentenced to be shot. On March 28th a telegram from Lord Elgin, then Colonial Secretary, to stay the executions caused the Natal Ministry to resign, nor was their resignation withdrawn till Lord Elgin had cancelled his objections. The executions took place on April 2nd, but hostilities continued till July; and though the charges of barbarity against the Natal troops in the suppression of the rising

were unproved, the official correspondence proved the exercise of "great severity"; some 3,500 natives were said to have been killed, and 2,000 wounded or taken prisoners, and the cost of the episode was £610,000 (*Ann. Reg.*, 1906, 404).

A frontier difficulty between Turkey and Egypt arose over a boundary dispute in the Sinai Peninsula. And when the Porte refused to agree to a proposed joint delimitation, military measures were taken, and at the end of April the Mediterranean Fleet was sent to Phalerum. A Note or Ultimatum was presented to the Porte on May 3rd, compliance with which on May 13th cleared the atmosphere. But the belief widely circulated that the Turkish resistance was due to German instigation was contradicted by Mr. Runciman on behalf of the Foreign Office on May 7th, and was merely one of those false rumours which at that time were partly the cause and partly the consequence of the prevalent state of alarm.

But what chiefly troubled English and European opinion was the Conference at Algeçiras; for it opened up endless possibilities of war. It seemed not unlikely that, instead of tending to reconcile Germany and France, as Prince Bülow dared to hope, the Conference might draw them farther apart, especially as it was well known that the sympathies of a majority of the Powers represented were antagonistic to Germany from the start. This was especially true of our own country, of whose thick-and-thin support of France Sir E. Grey made no concealment from the German Ambassador.

It is curious to find how the Kaiser, in January 1906, at the very time when the French Government was representing to Sir E. Grey its fear of an unprovoked attack from Germany, remained optimistic about peace. On January 29th he expressed his opinion to the Czar that it would "come out all right without war"; the decisive point being that no other Power had shown any disposition to lend France armed support should she wish to invade Morocco, and that without such support France was unlikely to face the risk. Some arrangement, he thought,

would be made which would ensure peace with honour to all parties concerned, and would maintain the "open door" for the trade of the whole world. Meantime, the more closely France was drawn over to Russia, the more she would keep out of mischief (*Letter* 54).

But the Kaiser's hope that the Conference would "come out all right without war" seemed rather a bold one. On December 9, 1905, Prince Bülow had complained of the efforts made by the English Press for years past to attribute to Germany all sorts of dark designs, and he strongly repudiated the allegation that in her Moroccan policy Germany was seeking for a cause of quarrel with France, or that her motive was money or plunder or the forcing of France into an alliance with Germany against England (*Reden*, ii. 259-60). Against Bebel's complaint of the Kaiser's visit to Tangier as a direct provocation to France, the Chancellor declared that he himself had counselled this step at a time when the Moroccan question was becoming acute, in order to emphasize the international character of the settlement required (*ib.* ii. 272). The Kaiser had declared in March 1904 to the King of Spain that Germany had no territorial aims in Morocco, and that his visit to the Mediterranean had no designs against the integrity and independence of that country. As in China, so in Morocco, the protection of Germany's commercial interests through the policy of the "open door" was her sole concern. The Chancellor had hoped, though in vain, that after his speech in the March of the previous year France would have approached Germany with a view to coming to an amicable understanding; but a part of the French Press had actually used the Anglo-French Convention of 1904 as a weapon against Germany, and for throwing difficulties in her way. If the claims on Morocco made at Fez by St. Réné Taillandier, on the strength of an alleged European mandate, were allowed to stand, he feared that German trade would receive a fatal blow, and Morocco would become a second Tunis, from which all non-French influence would be excluded.

And whilst matters stood on so unsatisfactory a footing

between France and Germany, preparations for an expected war became vigorous in England. Hardly had Mr. Haldane become Secretary for War in the new Government than the necessity of recasting the Army forced itself upon him, the problem being, in accordance with the military agreement of the Dual Entente, to mobilize rapidly as many as 160,000 men ; to transport them with the aid of the Navy to a place of concentration decided on by the French and British Staffs, and to have them at such appointed place within the space of twelve days. It took three years to work out this scheme, which was complete by the end of 1910 (*Before the War*, 33). But military opinion was divided as to the best plan of campaign. Major Huguet, the French Military Attaché in London, told Colonel Repington that the French Navy was prepared for war, the French Army ready, and reservists coming to barracks for orders. The First Naval Lord, Sir John Fisher, was creating a new Western Fleet, though confident that Admiral Wilson's Channel Fleet was "alone strong enough to smash the Germans." But, whilst Sir John Fisher and Sir George Clarke, the Secretary of the Defence Committee, and Sir John French, favoured an attack on the German coasts in case of war, and were opposed to a union of British with French forces on French soil, Colonel Repington himself, Major Huguet, Admiral Wilson, and General Grierson were totally opposed to such a plan, and experienced some difficulty in overruling it (*First World War*, chap. i.).

Military conversations thus naturally began between English and French authorities, and they began about the middle of January, almost simultaneously with the opening of the Conference on January 16th, under the presidency of the Spanish Foreign Minister, the Duke of Almodovar. There were two sets of conversations carried on at the same time. One began on January 17th between Major Huguet on the side of France and General Grierson on ours, with the previous sanction of Sir E. Grey and Mr. Haldane and the subsequent approval of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Neither the Cabinet as a whole nor Parliament was suffered

to know what was passing. But, despite efforts for secrecy, the *Figaro* " revealed the truth one fine day in a veiled but perfectly patent manner." Colonel Repington thought it a good thing that the Germans should thus or otherwise have got to know that the Dual Entente " had been supplemented by a plan of naval and military co-operation in the event of German aggression. It was bound to give the Germans pause, and make them dread the consequences of finding England across their path if they ventured on a war of aggression against France. This the Colonel thought that it did, thus removing the danger to peace. But he adds that these conversations, which Sir E. Grey, in his letter of November 22, 1912, to the French Ambassador spoke of as having occurred " from time to time in recent years," " continued uninterruptedly till the outbreak of war in 1914," leading to close co-operation between the British and French Staffs, and " to the gradual working out of all the naval, military, and railway projects for the delivery of our Expeditionary Force in France." But in that case, assuming Germany not ignorant of the position, how vain must have been Mr. Haldane's attempts to establish an *entente* with Germany in 1912 (*Before the War*, 103, 146) ; and how can it be pretended that the war, when at last it came after eight years of uninterrupted preparation by the experts, found the Powers of the Dual Entente totally unprepared for it ?

The other set of conversations began also in the middle of January between Colonel Barnadiston, our Military Attaché in Brussels, and General Ducarne, Chief of the Belgian General Staff. They are recorded in a letter of April 10, 1906, by the Belgian General, found later in the archives of the Belgian War Office, and reprinted in facsimile with an Italian translation (*Conventions Anglo-Belges*, Brit. Museum, 08027, i. 38). Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg said in his *Reflections on the World War* (148, Transl.) that these documents referring to the military use of Belgium were unknown in Germany before they were found during the war ; but their purport appears to have been known to Baron Griendl at Berlin as early as April 1906. The con-

versations concerned the landing of 100,000 men on the French coast near Calais or Dunkirk to act against any violation by Germany of Belgian neutrality. The transport would take ten days. Could Belgium protect herself during the transport? It was replied that the garrisons of Namur and Liège were secure against any sudden attack, and that in four days the Belgian Army would be ready to take its part in the defence. Barnadiston insisted on the conversation being strictly confidential; he did not bind his Government, nor did he know whether the King had been consulted, but he assured General Ducarne of the consent of General Grierson to the plan. Most minute secondary questions were discussed: the translators and gendarmes that should accompany the troops, the maps, the uniforms, the hospital arrangements for the wounded, etc. Colonel Barnadiston doubted whether Holland would help or intervene. And the scheme survived the settlement of the Moroccan question, for when General Ducarne met General Grierson at Compiègne at the September manœuvres, the English General told General Ducarne that the reorganization of the British Army could now ensure the landing of 150,000 men, who would be ready for active service sooner than had formerly been thought possible. So minutely was this scheme carried out that Sir Henry Wilson, the Director of Military Operations at Army Headquarters before the war, had bicycled time after time over the very ground of the eventual war, and at one place even chosen the billets for our Headquarters long before the war began (Wright's *At the Supreme War Council*, 38). Baron Greindl, on April 5th, thus expressed what the Germans felt about such military conversations and preparations:

"There is no longer any doubt that it was the King of England who, independently of the Government, incited M. Delcassé to pursue a warlike policy, and that it was he who made the promise to the effect that 100,000 soldiers should be landed in Holstein. . . . If any doubts could still prevail, they would be dispelled by the singular proposals which Colonel Barnadiston has made to General

Ducarne" (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 17). And again on April 18th: "The offer of 100,000 men, made by the King of England, cannot be forgotten in Berlin. We ourselves need only recollect the singular overtures made by Colonel Barnadiston to General Ducarne" (*ib.* 29).

It was under such unpropitious conditions that the Conference opened, and an anxious time it was for the new Liberal Government, bound as we were by the *entente* to give France our unstinted support at its deliberations. When asked by the French and the German Ambassadors in London whether we should give armed support in the event of war being forced upon France, in connection with our Moroccan agreement of April 8, 1904, Sir E. Grey replied that he thought public opinion in England would rally to the material support of France. That, he said, was only his opinion; though how it could be taken as other than a promise to France or than as a threat to Germany he never explained (speech on August 3, 1914). But Baron von Grootven, Belgian Chargé d'Affaires in Paris, wrote rather differently to the Belgian Foreign Minister on January 14, 1906: that Sir E. Grey had "recently repeated several times to the different Ambassadors in London that Great Britain was under certain obligations as regards Morocco, and that she would fulfil these obligations at whatever cost to herself in the event of a Franco-German war breaking out" (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, 15). In that case there was no restriction about German aggression, and our neutrality must have been far less neutral than was in 1914 tardily acknowledged to Parliament. Little did anyone dream in early 1906 how slight was our prospect of neutrality in the expected war, or suspect how that supposed instrument of peace, the *entente* of 1904, was rapidly being turned into an instrument of war. We were virtually committed without our knowledge to take part in any future French war against Germany, however it arose. A few years later, at the time of the Agadir incident in July 1911, orders were given for an expedition to land in France, "though it was no longer possible to send more than 80,000 men, instead of 160,000."

So Mr. George Wyndham told Blunt on October 13, 1911 (*Diaries*, ii. 381); and so much for the oft-repeated ministerial assurances of the purely innocuous meaning of the Dual Entente.

There were eighteen sessions of the Algeçiras Conference, including the last one on April 7th; and the discussions concerning smuggling, import duties, a State Bank, or the organization of the police, were often less harmonious than one might be led to suppose from a perusal of them in the second part of the French *Documents Diplomatiques, Affaires du Maroc*. And the war-cloud brooded over the Conference all the time. Germany was annoyed that, despite her neutral or friendly attitude to Russia during the Japanese War, the Russian representative at Algeçiras should have almost taken the side of England and France (*Reventlow*, 307). Our own attitude was equally pronounced. The English Press, wrote Baron Greindl on April 5th, did "all it could to prevent the Conference being successful. It showed itself to be more irreconcilable than the French Press. . . . It is not apparent that the British Ambassador made the slightest effort at Algeçiras with a view to discovering a solution equally acceptable to Germany and to France."

In this state of things it unfortunately added nothing to the chances of peace that the King, travelling *incognito* as the Duke of Lancaster on his way to Biarritz, visited Paris on March 3rd. Naturally he called on President Fallières, met him at dinner at the British Embassy one day, and on another himself entertained at lunch M. and Mme. Loubet and M. Delcassé. But this luncheon, like a similar one the year before, became a political event of the first importance. It was needless, wrote *The Times* correspondent, "to insist on the suggestive significance of this fact [the lunch] at the present moment. Few things more tactful have ever been done by Edward VII than this invitation, which proves the sincere esteem of His Majesty for the President and the Minister who did so much to facilitate the realization of his own efforts to bring about the *entente cordiale* between England and France." But another view

was also taken. The Belgian Minister at Paris, writing to the Belgian Foreign Minister on March 6th, described the lunch as a "highly significant demonstration"; by inviting M. Delcassé, the King had given a new meaning to the agreement of April 1904, and had solemnly approved a policy against which Germany had protested, and which France herself had repudiated. In diplomatic circles "this demonstration was considered, not only as useless, but also as very dangerous, at the present moment"; it was taken as "a symptom of England's desire to envenom matters to such an extent that war should be rendered inevitable" (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, 16). The Conference at the time had reached a critical stage over the policing of Morocco, and Germany saw in the King's visit to Paris, not only a retort to the Kaiser's visit to Tangier in 1905, but an expression of his intention to give a thoroughgoing support to that determined opposition to Germany which had suffered but little abatement from the resignation of M. Delcassé from the French Foreign Office in June 1905 (*Reventlow*, 276–7).

M. Rouvier, the Prime Minister, whose personal action did so much for a pacific issue, saw the King off from Paris on March 6th, and the next day the Rouvier Ministry was defeated in the Chamber of Deputies. During his stay at Biarritz the King had meetings with King Alfonso, with whom it is reasonable to suppose that their common policy about Morocco was reaffirmed. After a voyage in the Mediterranean, during which he was present at the Olympic games at Athens, the King again visited Paris on his way home, and was again entertained by President Fallières, the usual toasts of friendship between England and France being exchanged. The visit helped to cement the *entente*, owing to the great popularity which the King enjoyed both with the people and the statesmen of France. But Germany looked with suspicion on these civilities to France, and thought it less certain than it had seemed to the Kaiser at the end of January that France could count upon no armed support in case of war. The King was credited with having

expressed a wish for a military convention with France: a wish sympathetically received (*Schiemann*, vi. 109); and when M. Clemenceau, whose Ministry followed the Sarrien Ministry on October 22nd, was questioned in the Chamber about it, his answer that he neither knew of, nor believed in, any such convention was thought too evasive to disprove it (*ib.* vi. 374; *Reventlow*, 326). In any case, the military conversations that had occurred were referred to as well-known facts in the following April by Herr Bassermann at Magdeburg (*The Times*, April 17, 1907).

On March 6th, the same day on which King Edward left Paris, the Kaiser was thanking his cousin, the Czar, for the gifts and congratulatory deputations which he had sent in honour of the Kaiser's silver wedding. But it was no happy time for the monarchs of Europe. In Russia all this time the revolutionary movement, which was ultimately to develop into the Communist Government, was in full swing. Refugees from the Baltic provinces, from Courland and Livonia, were swarming into Germany: there were over 50,000 in Berlin alone. Many of the Russian nobles were in the direst distress, having seen their castles burnt, their forests destroyed, and their estates pillaged. The great landed German proprietors showed the utmost liberality in volunteering to receive Russian families into their houses. The Duma, opened for the first time on May 10th, created great difficulties for the Czar's Government, and the Kaiser could only hope that in course of time the Czar and his Duma might come to some reasonable *modus vivendi*. At the same time the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph was "also much irritated at the behaviour of his Parliament." And to these chronic troubles between monarchs and their Parliaments was added the gloomy menace of deliberate anarchy; as when on May 31st the lives of the King and Queen of Spain were attempted by a bomb thrown at the Royal coach as it was driving them back from their wedding.

The attempt was rightly described by the Kaiser as "dastardly and fiendish." He considered that his own failure and that of the Czar to cope with the anarchists

was due to their being allowed to live with absolute impunity in London, and he wished that the Continental Powers would send a joint invitation to the English Government to ask them to join in an international agreement " to fight these beasts " (*Letter* 56, June 14, 1906). About the same time an important change was made in the Russian Foreign Office. Count Witte, having resigned on the eve of the opening of the Duma, was succeeded by Isvolsky as Foreign Minister : " a most clever man," the Kaiser thought, " who would easily guide the course of Russian foreign politics along the peaceful lines " desired of the Czar. The Kaiser hoped that under Isvolsky's direction the Czar's Government and his own might continue to work with him in mutual confidence over the projected Bagdad railway, where German interests were " purely economic and commercial for the welfare of mankind." The Kaiser's mistrust of our Government showed no diminution. He could well understand that the English were, as the Czar had expressed it, " fiddling around " him about Asia, but, as his cousin had decided calmly to await their proposals, he felt sure that an understanding would remove many elements of friction, and would be satisfactory to the Kaiser himself. He thought the moment chosen by the English Fleet for their " self-invited visit " to the Baltic " must be most irritating and inopportune to the Czar and his country," and he was fully convinced of his cousin's feelings of indignation about it from his own feelings about their visit to Germany in 1905. He intended to have them closely watched on their return journey (*Letter* 56).

But the Kaiser's hopes of Isvolsky were somewhat misplaced, for Russia had no more bitter opponent of Germany and her Emperor than the new Foreign Minister. Before entering on his Foreign Office duties in May 1906, Isvolsky spent three weeks in Paris and London in communication with the Russian Ambassador in France, M. Nelidoff ; with the Russian Ambassador in England, Count Benckendorff ; and with the Russian Ambassador to Italy, M. Mouravieff ; and with them he settled the plan of Russian policy which

as Foreign Minister he proceeded to submit to the Czar. They had unanimously concluded that Russian policy "must continue to rest on the unchangeable base of her alliance with France," fortified and enlarged by agreements with England and Japan (*Memoirs*, 83). As he says himself, this was the beginning of the Triple Entente, which lasted throughout his Foreign Ministry (*ib.* 35–6), and was operative when the war began in 1914. Accepting the conventional belief that the Kaiser would be driven by his war party to begin a war of aggression, Isvolsky held that the only course of safety lay in fortifying by every possible means the political, military, and economic power of the Triple Entente (*ib.* 132). Whether he was right may be doubted: his policy, at all events, ended in war, and possibly Count Witte's might have averted it.

Isvolsky's strong anti-German feelings being well known at the English Court, it was naturally hoped in England that an Anglo-Russian Entente might supplement or develop out of the Anglo-French Entente (*Ann. Reg.*, 1906, 85). This hope grew, of course, in strength when our former alarms about Russia had been dissipated by her defeat by Japan; and the King's long intimacy with the Russian Court encouraged fresh efforts for drawing Russia over to the side of the Dual Entente (*Reventlow*, 310.) Rumour, indeed, soon began to talk of this desired *entente* as actually achieved, till on May 24th Sir E. Grey thought it prudent to deny the fact (*Ann Reg.*, 1906, 137).

With the political current running so strongly in this direction, it must be counted to the credit of diplomacy that the Algeçiras Conference terminated without an international rupture. It was from that date that Europe definitely ranged itself into the two main hostile camps which were destined to try conclusions eight years later. According to Count Goluchowski, the Austrian Foreign Minister, it was the mediatory action of Austria that saved the Conference from shipwreck (*ib.* 1906, 212), Austria being then on friendly terms with France as well as allied with Germany. But after the settlement Prince Bülow

admitted that for weeks fears of warlike developments had prevailed (*Reden*, ii. 303). His account of the transactions was of interest. Germany, he averred, had never wished to fight for Morocco, where she had no political interests nor aspirations, having neither historical connections with the country as Spain had, nor extensive conterminous frontiers with it, as France had, but only economical interests in a country recently opened up and capable of great future development. So long as Germany had a voice in the settlement and was not treated as a *quantité négligeable* by the other Powers, she had no desire to act in opposition either to France or to Spain. She had stood for the principle that an international treaty could only be altered with the consent of all the signatory Powers, and that commercial competition should be open to all of them equally. He paid a graceful tribute to France for her contribution to a peaceful settlement: "France, with the same conciliatory spirit as ourselves," had shown herself prepared for a loyal solution of the most difficult problem of all: the organization of the police. And Germany, acting in no niggardly spirit, but compromising in many questions of detail, had held unshakenly to the principle of the "open door." It had been a fairly difficult mountain to get over; many passages had not been without danger; but a time of trouble and unrest lay behind, and the future might reasonably be faced with tranquillity (*ib.* ii. 304). All which was excellently said, but was far from being a correct forecast of the future.

France, too, through the mouth of her Foreign Minister, M. Bourgeois, on April 12th, spoke equally in a tone of concord. He dwelt on the decisions arrived at as not only conformable with the wishes of France, but as received by all the Powers with the feelings that every equitable transaction inspired. He touched pleasantly on the conciliatory efforts of the Italian, American, and Austrian deputies; on the mutual confidence between France and Spain; and on the unshakable firmness shown by Russia and England in their support of the legitimacy and moderation of the French claims. He concluded with praise for

the "high morality" of the work accomplished; for its foundation in reason and equity; for the goodwill shown by the Powers in subordinating their particular views to the needs of a good understanding between all, and thereby assuring for the world's future that state of calm and confidence required for good international relations (*Documents Diplomatiques*, 288–94). All which was also excellently said, but proved a no less erroneous forecast than the Chancellor's.

The Sultan ratified the Algeçiras Act between himself and the twelve Christian Powers on June 18th, and the Act effected sundry reforms for the better government of his country. His sovereignty and independence were preserved, the integrity of his dominions maintained, and economic liberty assured for all nations. The final article (123) stipulated that all pre-existent treaties or agreements of any of the signatory Powers with Morocco were left unaltered except on points where any of their conditions conflicted with those of the General Act. As, therefore, the Anglo-French Declaration of April 8, 1904, was not an agreement *with* Morocco, but *about* Morocco, the Algeçiras Act in no way overruled or affected the secret clauses which were appended to the Declaration, and which continued to poison the whole political atmosphere of Europe.

It was to be regretted that all parties in Germany did not share in the Chancellor's professed satisfaction with the settlement. Baron Eckhardstein wrote of Germany's "complete diplomatic discomfiture at the Algeçiras Conference," but, though he had seldom a tolerant word for the Kaiser or most of his Ministers, he acquitted the Kaiser as "not directly to blame" for it (68, 126). And many who were strongly anti-English, like Count Reventlow, felt that, though peace had been preserved, the Conference had exposed the almost complete isolation of Germany and her powerlessness against the combination opposed to her (286). Germany had been forced to yield one position after another, and, though Delcassé had resigned, his spirit had survived and prevailed (*ib.* 284). All through the period King

Edward, his Ministers, and the British Press had let no opportunity pass of showing their antipathy to Germany and disregard of her claims (*ib.* 185). Count Reventlow thought in later years that, from the German point of view, Germany would have done better if, instead of resorting to an International Conference, she had in 1905 either settled the Moroccan quarrel separately with France or in default of such settlement had gone to war with her, at a time when the victory of Japan had rendered Russia useless as her ally (*ib.* 272).

In England we had been educated for so many years into an attitude of alarm of a German invasion that it is difficult to realize that as great an alarm of our innocent selves existed in Germany. This may be illustrated by a story told by Sir John (then Lord) Fisher. Mr. Beit, the South African millionaire, having returned in January from Berlin, where he had seen the Kaiser, the King sent Lord Esher to obtain from Mr. Beit some account of the interview. The Kaiser had said that he was aware that England wanted a war, not indeed the King nor his Government, but influential people like Sir John Fisher, whose view was that the British Fleet was in perfect order, and that, as the German Fleet was not yet ready, England should provoke a war. To which Beit replied that during long talks with Fisher at Carlsbad he had gathered nothing of any such views. The Kaiser replied: "He thinks it is the hour for attack, and I am not blaming him. I quite understand his point of view; but we too are prepared. . . . Fisher can no doubt land 100,000 men in Schleswig-Holstein—it would not be difficult—and the British Navy has reconnoitred the coast of Denmark with this object during the cruise of the fleet. But he forgets that it will be for me to deal with the 100,000 men when they are landed" (*Memories*, 33). And when Beit went on to tell the Kaiser that there was no feeling in England for war with Germany, and that Balfour on one side of politics and Campbell-Bannerman on the other were absolutely averse to it, the Kaiser replied that it did not matter which of them was Prime Minister, or which

party was in power, so long as Fisher remained. He also told Beit that he knew of Fisher's idea of the Baltic's being Germany's vulnerable point, and that he had heard of Fisher's plan of "Copenhagening" the German Fleet. Fisher doubted the truth of this, and thought the Kaiser only said it as obviously the thing he ought to say. And the Kaiser on a previous occasion had told a friend of Sir John's very much what he told Beit, namely, that the spot he was really afraid of was on the Pomeranian coast, less than 100 miles from Berlin, where the Russian Army had landed in the time of Frederick the Great, and where another army might land again. This had long been a German fear; for as far back as June 1899 a German General had expressed to Sir John his apprehension of our landing a large force only 90 miles from Berlin on a 14 miles' stretch of sandy beach in Pomerania, where no defence was possible against a battle-fleet "sweeping with devastating shells the flat country for miles, like a mower's scythe" (*ib.* 212).

With this knowledge of our designs of landing an army on the Continent it must have surprised Mr. Haldane, when he visited Berlin in the autumn, to find the Kaiser and his Ministers in so pacific a mood as he describes. Invited by the Kaiser personally, he was cordially received everywhere, both by the Kaiser and by the populace, though somewhat to the displeasure of the German war party, which "stood then unmistakably for a minority." And, though our Secretary for War, he was freely admitted to a study of the military organization of Germany, in the interests of the military reforms he contemplated at home. He recognized the "existence of peaceful ideas" among "a large majority of the people of Germany." In a conversation with the Kaiser in the Palace which lasted for two and a half hours the Kaiser disclaimed any dislike for our *entente* with France; he believed it might even improve relations between Germany and France, for which he wished and which he was trying to obtain. "Not one inch of French territory would he ever covet." "He desired no quarrel, and the whole fault was Delcassé's who had

wanted to pick a quarrel and bring England into it." What he himself wanted " was not territory but trade expansion." He could, however, not join in the Hague Conference, if disarmament were proposed. Yet the best testimony to his earnest desire for peace was that he had had no war, though he should have had it but for his having earnestly striven to avoid it (*Before the War*, 22, 36–40). But, if this was the mood of the Kaiser and of the German people, what can be thought of a diplomacy that failed to extract peaceable relations from conditions so favourable ?

Yet all the time peace rested on a most precarious footing. Lord Fisher has told a story which shows how very narrowly a war with Germany was actually missed at a date which he does not mention, but which it would have been all the more interesting to know, as the incident itself escaped the notice of the Press. The German Ambassador at Lisbon called one day on the Portuguese Prime Minister, and threatened to leave the next night unless certain concessions, including an isolated and fortified coaling-station at Madeira, were made to Germany. " The Portuguese sent us a telegram. That night we ordered the British Fleet to move." " Next morning the German Ambassador changed his mind about leaving, and expressed regret for having made a mistake." Lord Fisher for this service received the Grand Cordon of the Legion d'Honneur from the French President ; for, " if it had not been for the British Fleet on this occasion, the Germans would have been in Paris in a week " (*Memories*, ii. 2). So at least thought Lord Fisher.

The pacifist forces of the country continued throughout the year their unequal conflict with the militarist party. The Anglo-German Committee for promoting peace and friendship with Germany struggled gallantly against the naval and military preparations for a war which all apprehended and not a few desired. But it was powerless against the stronger social forces which would suffer no abatement of the animosity that had been bred of the Boer War. King Edward showed his sympathy with the movement by his reception in May at Buckingham Palace of the representa-

tives of the German Municipal Corporations on their visit to England. The German burgomasters were also entertained by the Lord Mayor, and by speeches from Mr. John Burns, Mr. Churchill, and Mr. Haldane, the latter of whom eulogized the Kaiser as a "true child of the time-spirit" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1906, 137). On June 21st a number of German editors and journalists were the guests at dinner of the Anglo-German Committee, with Lord Avebury presiding; the editor of the German *Nation*, Herr Barth, judiciously remarking that the disarmament of the nations ought first to begin with the Press. But this was a mode of disarmament that lay beyond the wildest dream of hope. "Alas," wrote Herr von Tschirsky, the German Foreign Minister, to Mr. Haldane, "papers like *The Times*, *Morning Post*, and *Standard* cannot bring themselves to refrain from their attitude of dislike, and are always rejoicing in being suspicious of every action of the Imperial Government . . . still I hope and am persuaded that the relations of the two Governments will remain good." Nor in the making of history was the influence of money on the Press a pleasing feature of the time. On April 25th Professor Schiemann wrote of it as no secret that during the Moroccan crisis the Press campaign caused much money to circulate; it was still less a secret that the last Russian war loan had only been made possible by enormous payments to the English and French newspapers (vi. 146). To what an extent in July 1914 money was employed to produce a certain mental atmosphere by bribing the Press has been abundantly revealed in the documents relating to that time. The practice became one of the chief functions of the ambassadorial office (*Die Deutschen Documente zum Kriegsausbruch*, Nos. 32, 47, 52, 97, 128, 167).

The first *Dreadnought* left Portsmouth on her trial trip on August 1st, and on August 4th the King and Prince of Wales went to inspect her. A few days later, August 11th, a visit for the day by the King to his nephew at Cronberg was "welcomed with universal sympathy in the German Press" (*Ann. Reg.*, 1906, 303). He received a cordial reception from the Kaiser. Nevertheless the propaganda of

mistrust between the nations continued, as was shown at the Pan-German meeting in Dresden in the middle of the month, where the late Conference was openly spoken of as a defeat for German diplomacy. It was said that Delcassé's revelations of England's promise of military aid to France, and the hostility of influential circles in England, made Germany's position as a Great Power precarious; that the Triple Alliance had become so much waste paper; and that the Navy was insufficiently increased. And on our side, public credulity continued to fasten and feed itself on the phantom of a German invasion, despite Sir J. Fisher's ridicule of the notion. In German opinion two considerations made such an idea impossible: first, the knowledge of the absolute inferiority of the German Fleet and of its certain destruction in case of war; secondly, the knowledge that German commerce and German colonies would be lost in a war. Germany was conscious that in a war her fleet could only act on the defensive, and that her whole strength would have to be directed against France, if allied with England, in order that she might in this way hope to compensate herself for the inevitable losses of her colonies and commerce (*Schiemann*, iv. 202). And this was to prove a remarkably accurate forecast of the future.

In this troubled state of international feeling the domestic reforms expected of a Liberal Government were skilfully defeated by the Unionist Opposition. Especially was this the case with the new Education Bill: a thorny subject for any Government. On July 30th it passed its third reading in the Commons by 369 to 177; but the Lords proposed certain amendments which virtually destroyed the Bill, and, though the Lower House rejected these amendments on December 11th by 456 to 107, Lord Lansdowne on December 17th carried his motion for insistence on them by 132 to 52, whereupon the Bill was dropped altogether after the enormous waste of talk and heated debate that had been expended upon it. For this fiasco the Prime Minister blamed Mr. Balfour, but the Opposition regarded it as a fresh monument to his sagacity.

To alleviate, if possible, the ferment of the nations, Prince Bülow, the Chancellor, made a speech in the Reichstag on November 14th which ranked as an historical event. Sir Charles Dilke wrote of it as "one of the best ever made by a statesman," and as creative of "universal astonishment" (*Life*, ii. 561). Beginning with a graceful allusion to Gambetta towards himself as a young man at Paris, the Prince went on to review the relations of his country to other foreign Powers in a way calculated to disarm their hostility. It was true that a closer friendship between France and Germany was rendered impossible by their past historical relations; no responsible French statesman had ever made any advances in such a direction; but peaceful and correct relations could continue, and it might be hoped that in both countries the feeling would grow that neither had an interest in taking upon itself the tremendous risk and the frightful misery of a war. In the field of industry and commerce the countries might work together, and agree perhaps on some colonial question. Germany had no thought of intruding between France and Russia, nor between France and England, nor of disturbing the friendship of France and England. As the Franco-Russian alliance had so far not endangered peace, it might fairly be hoped that the same thing might come to be predicable of the Anglo-French Entente. But that Entente would become a danger to peace unless it were combined with good relations between the World-Powers and Germany. A policy of which the foundation was the isolation of Germany, in order to cripple her, would be a dangerous policy for the peace of Europe.

As to England, there existed no deep political difference between her and Germany; their commercial rivalry was as compatible with good relations as was Germany's commercial rivalry with Austria or Italy. Sensible people in both countries should do their best to lay aside misunderstandings and to promote mutual friendliness; and in this reference he expressed satisfaction at the recent reception of the German burgomasters and journalists in England. There was no such thing in Germany as hatred for England,

and any bad feeling there was in England for Germany was due to the German Socialist Press, which had misrepresented the objects of Germany's measures for her self-defence at sea. The idea of the German Fleet being intended for an attack on England was simply foolish. Had not the First Lord of the Admiralty recently said that England had never before been so strong at sea, and that she could meet any combination of Powers? Germany had no thought of building a fleet so strong as England's, but it was her right and duty to have a fleet corresponding to her extensive trade interests and to her necessity of the defence of her transmarine interests and her coasts. Why should she not be as free to build ships as any other Power, including England herself?

He made light of Italy's anti-German attitude at the Conference. He brushed aside as lies the stories of Germany's designing expeditions against Tripoli or its Hinterland, or of her marching from the Cameroons over Tripoli to Trieste with a view to annexing it; these were pure fictions for making Italy mistrustful of Germany. Serious Italian politicians had no wish to steer the Italian ship of State from the quiet haven of the Triple Alliance into the stormy sea of new combinations on an adventurous, dangerous, and compassless voyage; for they knew that Italy's detachment from the Triple Alliance would increase the chance of a great and general conflagration. For this reason the continuance of that alliance was a European interest, as furthering the interests of peace.

The Chancellor went on to disclaim all idea of German intervention in Austria or in Russia. He had never known a time when relations with Russia had been more peaceful and correct, and he attributed this greatly to the frequent interchange of visits between the Kaiser and the Czar. They had dispersed the shadows of mistrust, and given to each of them full confidence in the pacific intentions of the other.

The Chancellor accompanied these assurances of Germany's pacifism with a rebuke to the Pan-German League

for their indiscriminate diatribes against all foreign nationalities. He deprecated their too bold dreams of the future, which only made more difficult the tasks of the present, and everywhere provoked mistrust of Germany abroad. Neither the German people nor their Kaiser nourished any warlike desires. That the German Empire, since its foundation thirty-five years before had kept at peace with all other Powers was proof sufficient of its pacific policy. And in future there would be no disturbance of the peace nor any offensive initiative from the side of Germany. But time and patience were needed for better Anglo-German relations, owing to the long period of misunderstanding that lay behind them. Too much importance had been laid on the disharmony between the King of England and the German Kaiser, for neither of them would suffer their personal feelings to have any influence over their regard to the political interests of their respective countries. King Edward had lately been received in Germany with the respect and honour due to him, not only as the chief of the British people, but in accordance with his abilities as a statesman ; the Cronberg meeting had strengthened the good personal relations between the two monarchs (*Reden*, ii. 315).

Nevertheless the Chancellor shared the belief universally held in Germany that King Edward's policy was to encircle Germany by a series of *ententes* with a ring of hostile Powers (*Deutsche Politik*, 57–60). Nor was this belief confined to Germany. The Belgian Ambassador in London wrote on May 24, 1907 : " It is plain enough that official circles in England are pursuing in silence a hostile policy which aims at the isolation of Germany, and that King Edward has not disdained to place his personal influence in the service of this idea " (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, 30). Nor did English opinion differ ; for, speaking of our *entente* with France and our *entente* with Russia in 1908, Mr. Blunt writes of these agreements as " interpreted in Germany as a design of ' hemming in,' which in fact it was," and as " the cause of the great European war six years later " (*Diaries*, ii. 225).

On the other hand, Lord Redesdale, with much personal knowledge of the King, treats the notion of his hostile designs against Germany as a mere exhibition of German spitefulness. "It is really amazing," he writes, "that the King should have been suspected [by the German Press] of hatred against Germany. Nothing could be farther from the truth, as I have good reason to know. The King delighted in his yearly visits to Germany; he loved the country, where he had many friendships, not to speak of his near relations . . . and yet the newspaper writers were never weary of girding at the King and proclaiming a hostility which was purely the invention of a mischief-making spite" (*Memoirs*, ii. 766–7). So, too, Lord Esher, in constant close connection with the King, treats as ridiculous the idea "that the King initiated or planned the *entente* between Great Britain and France" (*Influence of King Edward*, 57). At the same time he writes that the idea of the grouping of Great Powers for the sake of maintaining the *status quo* must ever be connected with the name of King Edward, "who presided, if not over its inception, over its partial triumph" (*ib.* 60). But this "grouping of the six most powerful States of Europe into two apparently hostile camps," thought by Lord Esher as "on the whole some guarantee of peace," was really bound to result in two camps hostile to one another. It was inconceivable that Germany should not have regarded the King's grouping of Powers as other than an attempt to surround her with enemies, knowing as she did all the time of the continued plans, naval and military, that were in preparation for a campaign against her, and of the English intention of landing a large force on the Continent to fight for France. It could only be a question of time before two such hostile camps came into collision with one another. For if two single Powers, armed to the teeth, are liable to be driven into war by their very fear of one another, how much more must this be the case where a group of armed Powers confronts another armed group: for the simple reason that the wider the group, the wider also will be the field for the interplay of conflicting interests,

of divergent ambitions, of misunderstanding, suspicion, and mistrust. The King might as well have hoped to grow figs from thistles as expect to propagate peace from a system of mutual fear.

There was, unfortunately, no answer from our side to Prince Bülow's November speech. The Foreign Office under Sir E. Grey would respond to no advances from a nation now accounted as "the enemy"; only entire submission to France could be the price of better relations with her rival; and thus an opportunity was missed which might have averted the war of 1914.

But the year was not to end in Germany without a great political convulsion. The condition of the German colonies came before the world for judgment. There were great financial abuses, and the papers of England, France, America, and Spain were full of articles headed "the German Panama." It was assumed that millions had been stolen, and that no honest German officials existed. It fell to the Chancellor to put the other side of the shield. He contended that the majority of the colonial officials were unsurpassed as a class by any in the world for their loyalty, industry, conscientiousness and integrity; it was wrong to look at bad cases through a magnifying-glass, or to regard single cases as typical. But he was bound to admit that some of the charges were true; he was for no hushing-up policy, but for inquiry into the abuses. But at whatever cost the colonies must be kept; it was not a question of having colonies or not; Germany must colonize whether she wished or not, and notwithstanding the difficulties that other nations from trade jealousy might throw in her way. And Germany must have 29 million marks for her troops in South Africa (*Reden*, ii. 345–52).

This was the last straw. The Centre Party in the Reichstag proposed to reduce the 29 millions to 20, and the number of troops to 2,500: a compromise which was rejected by the Government as insufficient for suppressing the actual insurrection or for preventing a fresh one. The Chancellor said that it was a question of national honour and of Ger-

many's title to respect in the world; Germany must see it through; the Government could not capitulate. So the Centre Party coalesced with the Social Democrats, and defeated the Government by 177 to 168; whereupon the Chancellor read out the Kaiser's command for the dissolution of the Reichstag, and the fate of Germany was referred to the electorate. Both sides complained loudly of unconstitutional action, the Government holding that the attempt of the Reichstag to reduce the troops in South Africa was an encroachment on the war-power which the Constitution reserved for the Executive, whilst their adversaries maintained that the dissolution was an act of arbitrary power, a sign of the personal rule of an autocrat.

CHAPTER VII

1907

THE "COMING" WAR

THE German Elections, conducted with more than their customary excitement, ended in a surprising victory for the Government. When the results became known on the evening of January 25th, Berlin went rather wild. Patriotic songs filled the air, and, when it was known that the Socialist losses were more than a dozen, enthusiastic crowds rushed to the Chancellor's palace in the Wilhelmstrasse, to be there addressed by him from the balcony (*Reden*, iii. 240). On February 5th the Kaiser, too, made a speech to a cheering crowd, and his popularity in Germany was the cause of surprise and alarm in other countries. His speech was, as usual, interpreted as a threat: a continuation, thought Baron Greindl, of the "campaign of calumny" waged against him for some years past in the French, English, and Russian Press (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 23). In England Baron Lalaing, Belgian Minister in London, attests the disappointment felt by both political parties at the unexpected electoral triumph of the German Government (February 8, 1907). Only in some quarters did the defeat of the Socialists afford some consolation; as in the *Standard* of January 29th, which declared that all the civilized world owed a debt of gratitude to the Kaiser and Prince Bülow for their courage in bearding, and for their skill in defeating, the common Socialist enemy.

The Chancellor naturally made the most of his victory. The Socialists had been reduced from 79 to 43. They and the Centre Party came in for severe flagellation. They had fought the election, he said in the Reichstag on February

25th, on the false issue of personal government, hoping so to deceive the electors. But personal rule did not come into the question; it was a gross untruth to say there had been unconstitutional action; for the Federated Governments had a perfect right, with the consent of the Kaiser, to dissolve the Reichstag if they thought it necessary for the safety of the country. But the greatest lie of the election had been the assertion that the Catholic religion was threatened; if there ever was a Government which could not be charged with hostility to religion or Catholicism it had been his, which had always stood for the equality and toleration of all religions. If he had failed in his efforts to unite all parties against the Social Democrats, it was the fault of the Centre Party, which had been guilty of a moral wrong in joining forces with a party that was for the overthrow of everything that Christians held dear and entertained a deadly hostility to the State and to the existing order of civil society. So long as Social Democracy combated the Monarchy, so long must every Minister with a sense of duty take part against it. The Socialists had disregarded his appeal of January 22, 1903, to keep to the path of loyalty and reason, and to refrain from injuring the feelings of the great majority of the German nation; they had with their idea of the general strike and of revolution played a frivolous and reckless game. They had deserved their defeat: the defeat of a narrow, dogmatic, and pusillanimous party, which, despite all their talk of high culture, practised an oppression and compulsion, and imposed an intellectual yoke which the world had hardly known since the Middle Ages. They had deserved their defeat for the false prophecies they had made; predicting first that the new tariff would never come to pass; then that no commercial treaties would ever be made on its basis; and lastly that, if they were, they would prove injurious to industry. And they had deserved their defeat because they put international aims above the national one, and placed the interests of their party above those of their country (*ib.* iii. 6–28).

The contiguity of Germany to Russia goes far to explain

the Chancellor's feelings about Socialism. For in Russia Socialism had taken a most ugly development. Scarcely a day passed without the news of some terrible murder, of the plundering of Government property, or of the burning by peasants of the houses or woods of their landlords (*Ann. Reg.*, 1907, 318). So perverted grew the moral sense that in many Russian houses the most prized possession would be an album of photographs of notorious murderers (*Schiemann*, vi. 339). And with all this reign of terror, which had lasted ceaselessly since the close of the Japanese War, went an alarming wave of superstition. At one village an old woman of eighty was killed by the peasants as a witch (*ib.* vii. 169). In another village a young peasant having dreamt that Antichrist had appeared in the person of a two-year-old boy and told the Commune the same, the Commune decided that the child must die. The parents thereupon with no apparent reluctance gave up the child, and the peasant prophet trod it to death (*ib.* vii. 315). There was no discernible diminution of the anarchy in Russia from the second Duma, which opened on March 2nd and was again dissolved on June 16th.

Had Schopenhauer been alive, the year 1907 would have borne abundant testimony to the claims of his pessimistic philosophy. Turning from Russia to Turkey, he would have pointed to the atrocities committed in Macedonia by Greek or Servian or Bulgarian bands upon one another, and would have asked what had the so-called Powers done to reduce them. In France the colonial scandals would have attracted his attention, with their tale of officials charged every week with the waste of public money or with acts of gross cruelty. And in Germany there were the worse moral scandals connected with the names of Prince Eulenburg, Kuno Moltke, and Count Hohenau.

So might the pessimist have roamed with satisfaction over the world till he came to our own happy islands. There he would have found a condition of subdued civil war; with the Liberals in office, but with the Unionists in power, and with the House of Lords behind them to alter or reject

any measure that Mr. Balfour wished altered or rejected. So it was that the question of the House of Lords began to overshadow every other. Was a Liberal Government only to exist or to act on the sufferance of an oligarchy mainly of birth, more defiantly clothed with political supremacy than the Crown itself? All the legislation of the year was haunted by a sense of this antagonism and of the necessity of its removal. It is true that after many years a law was passed which made it legal for a man to marry the sister of a deceased wife; but measures of land reform for Ireland and Scotland were either vetoed or changed beyond all recognition. Under Lord Rosebery's auspices the Liberal League, which had been quiet during 1906, came to the front again, the once Liberal Prime Minister on March 23rd disclaiming any obligation of allegiance to the new Liberal Government, so that the Scottish Land Bill found no more bitter opponent among the Conservatives than it found in Lord Rosebery (*Ann. Reg.*, 1907, 214). The fashion grew of belittling all Liberal measures as only introduced for the pleasure of a later quarrel with the Lords: this was Mr. Balfour's charge on August 22nd against the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill; and the Irish Councils Bill, which was speedily withdrawn by reason of its prompt rejection by the Irish Nationalist Conference of Dublin, was decried by the Attorney-General for Ireland as introduced solely as affording material for a quarrel with the Lords (*ib.* 1907, 170). The theory of our Constitution, that no political system was so good as one where two Legislatures pulled in different directions, was breaking down; and the ineffective resolution carried by 432 to 147 on June 26th for establishing more workable relations for the two hostile Houses prepared the way for the Parliament Act of 1911, which confined to one year the right of the House of Lords to stay whatever legislation it regarded as uncongenial.

And for some time the tide had begun to flow strongly towards reaction, as shown by the defeat of the Progressives at the London County Council elections of March 2nd, and

by the leading newspapers, of whose unscrupulous misrepresentation of every action and motive of the Liberal Government Mr. Churchill on May 18th, at Edinburgh, vigorously complained.

As another base of attack against his Government the Prime Minister on May 7th referred to the Colonial Conference: for the first time called the Imperial Conference, which lasted from April 15th to May 14th, and which attacked free trade by striving chiefly for Colonial Preference; that is, for a tax on all foreign imports into England, without in return any promise of the remission of colonial taxes on English imports to the Colonies. And the Conference was used not merely as a lever for Tariff Reform or Protection, but for the military aims of the National Service League; as when on May 16th, at the Queen's Hall, Mr. Deakin, the Australian Premier, supported by Lord Milner and Lord Roberts, strongly advocated compulsory military service for the country. But as regards conscription or protection, the Colonial Premiers were doomed to disappointment, and they returned to their respective colonies with but little to show for their ill-advised intrusion into the politics of the mother-country beyond their clearly expressed wish to divert its course on to reactionary and imperialistic lines.

But the chief impediment to reform was the great and resistless development of militarism. The year began with a general belief in impending war; talk of the "coming war" was common both in England and France. For talking to his troops of "the coming war" General Bailloud was transferred from his command in the North of France to one in the South (*Ann. Reg.*, 1907, 277). As such belief helps to bring to pass the thing believed in by producing a spirit of fatalistic and effortless acquiescence in its reality, it was a great misfortune that so leading a member of the Cabinet as George Wyndham, the Irish Secretary, looked upon a war with Germany as a certainty, "perhaps in five years, perhaps in thirty" (*Blunt*, ii. 177, May 9th). This belief in the inevitability of war, widely held and pro-

pagated, was fatal to all efforts to prevent it. And the war atmosphere was increased by Lord Haldane's Territorial and Reserve Forces Bill for recruiting additional auxiliary forces; it may be surmised that the expansion of our Army had been insisted on by France as a condition of the continuance of the *entente*. These military reforms occupied so much of Parliamentary time that as many as eight measures had to be dropped altogether from the Government programme on July 26th. It was contended that recruits for the new Territorial Army would only be pledged to *voluntary* service abroad; compulsion was far from the mind of the Army Council and the Defence Committee, who were behind the War Secretary; only Home Defence was thought of, and the measure was falsely represented rather as an entrenchment against conscription than as a step towards it. But Lord Roberts on April 4th blessed it at Birmingham as the greatest step yet taken towards the creation of a National Army; which, of course, was bound to be a Conscript Army on the Continental model. Those who objected to the whole scheme as tending to promote jingoism were few and far between, and only spoke to the winds.

A less hopeful atmosphere for the meeting of the second Hague Conference could not have been imagined. Our preparations for becoming a great military as well as the greatest naval Power were hard to reconcile with the zeal for disarmament affected by our Foreign Office. "The English Press," wrote Baron Greindl on March 28th, "pursues its campaign of slander with greater violence than ever. It sees the hand of Germany wherever anything disagreeable happens to England. When necessary it invents stories purely and simply, such as that of the alleged plan for closing the North Sea." Some resentment was shown at the first speech on international relations delivered by Prince Bülow in the new Reichstag on April 30th. His position was that, as Great Britain had made her participation in the Brussels Conference of 1874 conditional on the exclusion from the discussions of the question of the

capture of private property on sea, so Germany might do about disarmament. The question might be left to the particular Powers interested in the subject. Germany had never abused her military strength, nor would ever do so. It was better to take no part in unpractical discussions, though any practical proposals would be considered At the Hague Conference Germany would show that she honestly supported all practical efforts for the promotion of peace, civilization, and humanity (*Reden*, iii. 34–36).

This was a chilling speech, but it took its colour from the circumstances of the time. Both France and England had recently declared against any reduction of their fleets (*Schiemann*, vii. 43), and in the fevered state of the world, brought about by our commitments to France, there was no real wish for disarmament anywhere. The foundations of the Palace of Peace, Mr. Carnegie's gift to the world, were laid on July 30th by M. de Nelidoff, the President of the Hague Conference, but there was no moral substructure for such a palace in the hearts of the rulers of this world.

But the Chancellor's speech was doubtless much influenced by the recent travels of King Edward, whose every movement gave fresh impulse to German apprehension. From February 2nd to February 9th the King and Queen stayed at Paris *incognito* as the Duke and Duchess of Lancaster. Their visit was rather suddenly arranged, and created some surprise. A feeling perceptible in France of too great a subservience to British policy made it desirable to fortify the *entente*. The King gave the German Ambassador, Prince Radolin, the most pacifying assurances that his journey had no other object than to afford recreation to the Queen; but with M. Clemenceau and the Minister of War he dwelt on the necessity for France of keeping up a strong Army and Navy. The visit, which sent the French Press into ecstasies, threw the German Press into wild alarm. M. Leghait, Belgian Minister at Paris, thought that France, sincerely desirous of peace, would need great diplomacy to convince Germany that the *entente* was in no

way directed against her; and he deprecated the irritation needlessly given to the Kaiser. The more serious papers, he noted, were so conscious of the danger of the game that they showed no joy at this "new demonstration of English friendship" (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, No. 4, February 10, 1907). But the *Echo de Paris* welcomed it as a sort of answer to the revival of German Imperialism, which was taken as signified by the decisive Conservative victory at the recent German elections. The *Débats* gave expression to the general French view that attributed the *entente*, as did also Lord Esher, to King Edward personally: "With a very clear recognition of the necessities of current politics and an admirable tact in their execution, the King was the immediate author of the *entente cordiale*" (*The Times*, February 4th). The remark of the Conservative German *Reichsbote* that the King had gone to see what was going on in his "branch establishment in Paris" greatly offended the French Press. On February 6th the King lunched with President Fallières at the Elysée, and there met all the chief members of the French Government, including M. Clemenceau, the Prime Minister, and M. Pichon, the Foreign Minister; on February 8th he lunched with the Marquis de Breteuil, with whom as Prince of Wales the conception of a Triple Entente had long before been a settled policy: little facts noticed in our own Press, nor, therefore, likely to have passed unnoticed in Germany. It was suspected that politics not less than French plays were the attractions to Paris.

After spending most of March at Biarritz, the King, in his yacht the *Albert and Victoria*, reached Carthagena from Toulon on April 5th, being escorted thither by the cruisers *Lancaster* and *Suffolk*, and met there, as arranged, by the Atlantic Fleet. With him were Sir John Fisher and Sir Charles (since Lord) Hardinge, permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. On April 8th there was a banquet on the Spanish battleship *Numançia*, at which King Alfonso referred in graceful terms to the King's "generous task of strengthening good feeling and harmony

between all States," and at which he conferred the Grand Cross of the Order of Charles III on Sir Charles Hardinge, on Sir John Fisher, and on Sir C. Drury, the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, and Crosses of the Order of Naval and Military Merit on all the commanders of the British warships. Sir Charles Hardinge was then the King's " special man, going everywhere abroad with him, and fulfilling the functions appertaining to the Secretary of State as Cabinet Minister "—as Sir Horace Rumbold told Blunt (*Diaries*, ii. 183). All the diplomacy of the time, said Sir Horace, was done by Hardinge and the King; Sir E. Grey, the Foreign Secretary, being only their mouthpiece in the House of Commons (*ib.* ii. 213). On April 9th the two Kings left their respective yachts and visited one another's fleets, whilst their Ministers and Ambassadors discussed international politics. The main purport of the meeting was to dissipate certain Spanish misgivings about France in connection with Morocco, and to attach Spain more firmly to the British policy; also to arrange for the building of a new Spanish fleet under British direction in Spanish harbours, and for a Spanish loan in London for the building of the new battleships (*Reventlow*, 317). But in Berlin the King's visit to the King of Spain was interpreted to mean, in Baron Greindl's words, " a strategical move in the campaign undertaken personally, with as much perseverance as success, by His Majesty Edward VII, with a view to the isolation of Germany " (April 18th). And this, no doubt, was the historical truth of the matter.

The Carthagena visit was rightly connected with the formation of the Anglo-Spanish agreement, which became public on June 15th, for securing the *status quo* in the Mediterranean and in Atlantic waters. It removed the old sore about Gibraltar by recognizing our right to its possession. At the same time Spain made a similar agreement with France about the Mediterranean; and thus Spain was drawn into the orbit of the *entente*, with at least her neutrality assured in the " coming war." German surprise

and alarm were somewhat allayed by a declaration from M. Pichon that the intention of these treaties was purely pacific, and by telegrams from both England and France denying any motive in them of hostility to Germany (*Schiemann*, vii. 231–2). But the denial in the French and English papers that any secret agreements accompanied the treaties gave but little satisfaction, since such denials were commonly made till the moment came when it became profitable to disclose them. It had, for instance, been denied that King Edward's visit to Carthagena had any political purpose, but already American papers, like the *New York Herald*, the *New York Times*, the *Sun*, and the *World* were heading their articles with such expressions as "Germany's Isolation," "Check to the Kaiser," etc. And of these papers the *Sun* was derivative from the *Matin*, and the *Matin* from the *Daily Mail* (*ib.* vii. 256). Perhaps, wrote Count Reventlow, German public opinion exaggerated the importance of these Mediterranean treaties, but it was a right instinct which regarded them as a fresh step in the encircling process; King Edward was the "father" of the Anglo-Franco-Spanish agreement, ably supported by M. Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador at Madrid (319). When the communications relating to this Triple Agreement were presented by the Spanish Ambassador to the German Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, with the assurance of its wholly pacific nature, Herr von Mühlberg interrupted him with the words, "Yes, I know; we are advancing towards an era of perpetual peace"; and this ironical remark well expressed the small degree of faith placed by Germany in the alleged motives for the latest move of the Allied diplomacy.

The King's intention to visit Italy after Spain was doubtless the reason of Prince Bülow's previous meeting with the Italian Foreign Minister, Signor Tittoni, at Rapallo on March 31st. Owing to the improved relations of Italy and France to one another, Italy depended much less on German support than she did when fear of an attack from France induced her in 1882 to join the Triple Alliance;

so that, in view of the King's suspected attempt to win Italy over to the camp of the Dual Entente, it was thought desirable to intimate to the world that the Triple Alliance was still in full vigour, and a force to be reckoned with by Germany's enemies. So after an interview of an hour and a half it was announced that over all the vital questions of the day Germany and Italy found themselves in complete accord.

Nevertheless, Italy was the weakest part of the Triple Alliance, so that when on April 18th King Edward's yacht passed through a line of twelve Italian battleships and twelve Italian torpedo-boats, and the Kings of Italy and of England met at Gaeta and embraced and kissed one another, and Signor Tittoni had a twenty minutes' talk with Sir C. Hardinge, the prevalent view taken in Germany was that the meeting aimed at counteracting the effect of the Conference at Rapallo. The Austrian *Neue Freie Presse* took it as a fresh proof of the diplomatic duel between England and Germany: which indeed it was. And the *Cologne Gazette*, the organ of the National Liberal Party, said that it would tend to make Germany and Austria increase their armaments as provision against danger arising from the Anglo-French Entente. Three days before the Gaeta meeting, on April 15th, Bassermann, the National Liberal leader, had at Magdeburg expressed the displeasure the meeting caused in Germany. England, he complained, was everywhere; King Edward was everywhere; in every quarter of the world England was pursuing a policy unfavourable to Germany. The days of Germany's influence were past; the Triple Alliance was in its dotage. Since the Algeçiras Conference Germany had regarded Italy with the greatest mistrust, since she could not feel sure that in case of war Italy would admit a *casus fœderis*; and all the time that England was advocating disarmament she was increasing her own armaments with the utmost precipitation. Germany should let France know that she regarded the limitation of her armaments as her own affair, and let England know the same about her Navy. Germany did

not wish to use her Navy against England, but she would fight if forced to do so. She was resolved to be mistress in her own house (*The Times*, April 18th). He asserted that England had entangled Russia in a war with Japan for her own interests (the same charge that was so often made against the Kaiser), and had entered into an agreement and military convention with France.

Prince Bülow did what he could to pour oil on the troubled waters, in his speech of April 30th. He deprecated the doubts which had been cast on Italy's fidelity to the alliance by the Gaeta meeting. As the Kaiser in all his visits to the Mediterranean visited King Victor Emmanuel, so it was natural for King Edward to do the same. Friendly relations between Italy and England in nowise conflicted with Italy's attachment to her allies. Direct and open discussion would suffice to overcome all difficulties with Italy; all that Germany cared for was equal commercial competition. This was her sole desire in Persia, and therefore she looked without disturbance on the recent Anglo-Russian agreement about Persia, as also on their agreement about their Asiatic boundaries in Thibet and Afghanistan. Between Germany and England there were no disputes that lay beyond the reach of friendly settlement; nor was there any cause for good relations between France and Germany being disturbed; he hoped for the gradual subsidence of their mutual mistrust (*Reden*, iii. 38–9).

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman on May 9th, at Manchester, fully recognized the candour and friendliness of this speech, but it took some days before the German Press assumed a calmer tone; the French and German Press exchanged bitter taunts; whilst in Italy the offence taken at an apparent claim on Germany's part to exercise a sort of dictatorship over Italy's hospitalities to foreign guests did more to shake the Triple Alliance than the Gaeta meeting itself. But the King was a good deal more than an ordinary foreign guest. Italy coveted Tripoli from Turkey, and such an annexation of Tripoli as was crowned with success in 1911–12 was only staved off in 1908 by the influence of

the German Kaiser on the Sultan. Both the French Government and our own had the thought that by acquiescence in Italy's ambition "Italy might be won over and detached from the German-Austrian Alliance" (*Blunt*, ii. 208). Was not this the secret of Gaeta?

A caricature, called the "Tiger Hunt," in a Japanese paper about this time, cleverly expressed the international situation. An elephant with the features of King Edward bearing on his back a Russian soldier, an English one, a French one, and a Japanese, were in pursuit of a tiger with the face of William II. Chéradame accepted this as a fair representation of a coming Quadruple Entente against Germany. Did not the recent increase of the Japanese Army indicate a readiness to take part in a war if Germany declared one? In forty days the Japanese mercantile marine of 100 vessels, carrying each 1,000 men and equipment, could land 100,000 men at Marseilles, in easy proximity to the battlefield (*Schiemann*, vii. 215–16). Wild as such an alliance then seemed, it was destined to come to pass, and even then it was not many days before there were apprehensions in Germany of such an alliance as actually in course of formation (*ib.* vii. 222).

It was on June 10th of this summer that Japan signed a short treaty with France, and on July 30th a treaty with Russia. Both these treaties, for the little that such phrases were worth, professed the same desire for the independence and integrity of China and for the equality of trade in that country; but these fresh treaties, together with our own of 1902, completed the quadruple ring round China of Japan, France, Russia, and Great Britain, for the benefit of what was called the China Pooling Syndicate, to the exclusion of Germany (*Pooley's note to Hayashi's Memoirs*, 215–16). It marked a further step in the policy of the isolation of Germany which during these years so greatly embittered the international situation in Europe.

At the close of May an effort was made to improve Anglo-German relations by a visit from a number of English journalists to Berlin, in return of the visit to England of

the German journalists in 1906. On May 29th there was a banquet at the Berlin Zoo, at which Mr. Spender made the leading English speech, and Dr. Mühlberg, the German Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, responded in a friendly tone, assuring his hearers for the hundredth time that the Navy Bill of June 14, 1900, only aimed at creating a Navy for the defence of the German coasts and German sea trade; it was not built for the conquest of fresh territory, as Germany did not desire territorial expansion (*The Times*, May 30th). In both Asia and Africa her only concern was for the "open door" for trade, and this was a point of union between England and Germany; a connecting bridge which they might hope to cross together. Sir Francis Lascelles, our Ambassador at Berlin, made a sympathetic response; Sir Francis was all for friendlier relations, and made a sound pacifist speech; but it seems probable that he was never forgiven, as on June 27, 1908, he was reported as being "out of favour now with the King, as being too German in his sentiments" (*Blunt*, ii. 213). On May 30th the journalists were the guests of the Berlin Chamber of Commerce, and there were loyal toasts to King Edward and to the Kaiser.

On May 31st the journalists were conveyed by special train to Potsdam to witness the Spring Parade of the garrison. Then after lunch in the Orangerie the Kaiser arrived and "conversed in a very friendly manner with the principal guests." The travellers then laid wreaths on the tombs of the Emperor and Empress Frederick. Equally cordial welcomes were accorded to them at Dresden, Munich, Frankfort, Cologne and Rudesheim, before leaving for Copenhagen. The visit was a great success in every way.

All this was in the right direction; but *The Times* frowned on the whole proceedings. In the past, said its Own Correspondent, every demonstrative German *chamade* had been the invariable, and doubtless conscious, prelude to some aggressive enterprise of foreign policy. The hope of Germany was a vain one, that the clarification of English opinion might even at the eleventh hour be arrested by an

exchange "of thickly buttered compliments" (*The Times*, May 31st). In pursuance of this irreconcilable attitude, *The Times*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Daily Mail* refrained from sending any representative to the Berlin festival of harmony (*Schiemann*, vii. 217). If those patriotic papers could prevent it, there should be no renewal of good relations between the two countries. It was true, of course, that in some German papers there had been some ugly things said of King Edward's visit to Carthagena and Gaeta; but, if other English journals seized the chance of burying the hatchet, for what motive but a preference for an attitude of determined hostility did *The Times*, the *Daily Mail*, and the *Morning Post* abstain from a movement which at least held out some chance, however slight, of promoting the maintenance of peace?

Professor Schiemann justly remarked that the control of the daily Press was a more important problem of the present day than the Hague Conference itself and more difficult of solution than the problem of disarmament or of an international tribunal. People talked of a "free" Press, but nothing in public life was more involved in dependence than the German Press: dependence on party, dependence on finance, dependence on interest (vii. 143). And the remark is true of all countries. From time to time feelers were thrown out for a possible *entente* between France and Germany, and the idea had been kept alive since the 'eighties of the nineteenth century, but all such attempts had been wrecked by the French identification of patriotism with revenge (*ib.* vii. 135). When in the spring the French doctor Mauchamp had been murdered in Marakesch, though Germany expressed satisfaction at the swift steps taken by France to obtain compensation from the Sultan of Morocco, some French papers suggested that Mauchamp's companion, Dr. Holtzmann, had instigated the murder (*ib.* vii. 120). Count Reventlow says that the French reports of Germany's having instigated the natives to the crime were taken up by our Press with bitter violence (*Reventlow*, 320). In consequence of the murder the French besieged Ushda;

but M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, disclaimed all thought of conquest, and undertook to limit military action to the recovery of the satisfaction demanded.

The hope that the Algeçiras Act of 1906 would lead to an understanding between France and Germany, and to a relaxation of the European tension, came to nothing; for the tension only increased, and it seemed to Germany that the English Press-baiting of Germany became not only more decided in expression but less scrupulous in its methods (*Reventlow*, 323). The hostility of our Press to Germany, indeed, founded on the imputed German design of overthrowing England's world-power, seemed to Germany too incomprehensible to be taken as sincere; the purpose seemed to be so to accustom the English mind, by constant repetition, to the idea that a sudden blow on the German Fleet, as the source of danger, would seem but an act of legitimate self-defence (*Schiemann*, vii. 172). Against this drift of the Press it was to little purpose that the *Westminster Gazette*, regarded as the organ of our Government, argued that only a small number of Englishmen were determinedly anti-German, as they had been anti-French a few years before; or that the great majority of Englishmen had never wished the *entente* with France to be used as a weapon against Germany (*ib.* vii. 262). For in such a matter it is the few, not the many, that count. Nor were the speeches made in the Lords and Commons in early March forgotten, in which the possibility was discussed of a piratical attack by German squadrons on our coasts, "as if we were a nation of corsairs" (*ib.* vii. 99). And indeed, if such things are possible, it is not a case of rattling back into barbarism; we are there already.

Conversations which took place at Kiel on June 28th between the Kaiser and Prince Bülow and M. Etienne, a former French Minister, following the cordial speech by the Kaiser a few months earlier to M. Jules Cambon, on presenting his credentials as the new French Ambassador to Berlin, gave fresh rise to rumours of a Franco-German *entente*, but nothing resulted, nor was anything likely to

result so long as France clung to her policy and her hopes of *revanche*. Of more importance than the meetings with M. Etienne was the Kaiser's meeting with the Czar at Swinemünde in early August.

This meeting had been arranged long before; for so long ago as June 14, 1906, the Kaiser had alluded to their meeting at Swinemünde, "where we shall try to be a merry company" (*Letter* 56).

In his letter of New Year's good wishes of February 2, 1907, the Kaiser had hoped that he and the Czar might be able to meet somewhere on the "water," where Prince Henry would be happy "to show you the fleet under his flags." In face of the efforts to draw Russia on to the side of France and England, it seemed more than ever necessary to court the favour of the Czar. So on August 3rd the "merry company" duly met, the Czar and the Kaiser being accompanied by their respective Ministers, Isvolsky and Prince Bülow, avowedly for political discussion (*Schiemann*, vii. 299). The German Fleet in its full strength of twenty-three ships indicated to the Czar, as threat or promise, the reality of Germany's growing power on the sea, and the episode was regarded in certain Russian circles as a comforting sign that Russia was not too far committed to England and France, but was tending to return to her old German connection. A few days later, on August 8th, the Kaiser arrived at Wilhelmshöhe, where on August 12th he was joined by Prince Bülow. It may be guessed that they had much discussion about the meeting with the King of England, which was expected in two days' time.

The King reached Wilhelmshöhe, near Cassel, as expected, on August 14th. It was one of the many occasions on which he was accompanied by Sir Charles Hardinge, the governing thought of whose diplomacy was apprehension of the growth of the German navy and a resolution by every possible means to check its further growth. This was conspicuously shown the following year (1908) on the occasion of the King's visit to his nephew at Cronberg, when the menacing language employed to the Kaiser by Sir Charles, as

spokesman for the King, so sorely tried the temper of their Imperial host (*Repington's First World War*, ii. 23–4). But of this one day's visit no unpleasantness is recorded; the naval question was apparently not stirred, nor is there reason to doubt that the meeting did something towards lessening the jealousy roused by the King's recent visit to the King of Italy; the Kaiser sparing himself no pains to welcome his uncle "with every mark of distinction and consideration." Nothing could have exceeded the cordiality of the toasts they interchanged nor the nobility of the sentiments they expressed; but of course the degree of correspondence between their words and their thoughts no one could measure.

But as the King was on his way to Marienbad, taking Ischl *en route*, the meeting with the Kaiser only lasted for a day, and the King continued his journey the same night. He was met at Gmünden on August 15th by the Austrian Emperor, Francis Joseph, with whom and with Sir Charles Hardinge a long interview preceded the usual public announcement that complete agreement had been reached about reforms in Macedonia. What else was talked of was left to conjecture. It was natural to surmise that there was some hope of detaching Austria from her bondage to the German Alliance. Was her loyalty unassailable? Her feelings towards Germany were undoubtedly cooling. The Austrian Foreign Minister, Baron von Arenthal, had met the Italian Foreign Minister, Signor Tittoni, at Desio in July, and proclaimed to the world the identity of Austrian and Italian interests and the continuance of their alliance. But Austria was annoyed with the German Kaiser for having spoken of her in 1906 as having played the part of a "brilliant second" at the Algeçiras Conference.

The King continued his journey to Marienbad for his cure, and there remained till September 7th. There it was that one day, on leaving the Hôtel Weimar for a motor drive, he picked up a stick for an old woman who had dropped it, politely raising his hat at the same time (*The Times*, August 20th). But of more historical importance than this touching incident was M. Clemenceau's visit on August

21st, who motored over from Carlsbad to lunch with the King. The visit, though "susceptible of a political interpretation," was declared to be informal; but it was significant that Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, also motored over from Carlsbad on September 5th and had a talk with the King, declaring soon afterwards that in his opinion the world had seldom worn so peaceful an aspect (*The Times*, September 13th). But that is the common diplomatic convention. And the concentration of 86 per cent. of our fleet in home waters, with so many as twenty-six battleships and fourteen armed cruisers facing the North Sea, failed to be taken in Germany as a symbol of endearment (*Schiemann*, vii. 293).

On October 16th Isvolsky arrived in Paris for a ten days' visit, during which he saw much of the leading French statesmen, and possibly met Sir John Fisher, who returned from Paris to London on October 18th. It is difficult to think that all these meetings and movements had nothing to do with the Anglo-French-Russian combination against Germany.

And whilst the diplomatic world was thus striving to keep Europe at peace or hatching plans for a most possible war, the second Conference at the Hague was labouring over those schemes for the regulation of the methods of slaughter which were predestined to end in such inefficient and disappointing conclusions. It was a curious fact that the French and Spanish squadrons were bombarding Casablanca at the very moment when the Conference was passing a resolution against the bombardment of undefended towns. But that war is as little likely to be mitigated as it is likely to be abolished so long as powerful armament firms depend on its continuance for their princely profits is the growing conviction of most thoughtful people.

Military alliances are of the nature of clouds which coalesce for a time and then melt away, and it is probable that the terror of the Triple Alliance would in time have faded away of itself had King Edward and his advisers been content with the old policy of Gladstone and Lord

Salisbury of keeping aloof from Continental alliances. The sedulous building up of a hostile counter-alliance avowedly against the Central Powers only threw Germany into a state of fever from which war alone could ultimately give relief. But for the time nothing could have surpassed the success of the King's diplomacy. The great hope had been to turn the Dual Entente into a Triple Entente by union with Russia. Professor Schiemann on April 3rd noted the "quite unusual manifestations of honour" recently shown to a Russian squadron visiting England (vii. 128). King Edward telegraphed to the Admiralty to invite some Russian officers and soldiers from Portsmouth to London, and on March 26th twenty Russian officers and some hundred sailors became the guests of the Admiralty, and were fêted in the usual way, crowds cheering them on their arrival at Victoria, and giving them an ovation at the Alhambra. Count Reventlow saw a political meaning in this enthusiastic reception (308), and the episode was doubtless a prelude to the Convention which on the last day of August startled the world by the close connection it established between ourselves and a Government that had for so many years been our greatest bugbear. By this Convention both Powers, whilst pledging themselves to respect Persia's independence and integrity, and to maintain peace there and the freedom of trade, divided Persia into three zones, of which the northern was to be under Russian influence, the southern under British, and the middle left to Persia. Russia recognized our special interests in the Persian Gulf, and came to terms with us about Afghanistan and Thibet (*Reventlow*, 308). For the sake of peace a definite division of political and commercial claims between Russia and ourselves was better than constant contact and friction in the same territory, and the agreement put a stop to a contemplated Russian railway which might have endangered India. Sir E. Grey, at Berwick in December, spoke of the Convention as starting a new era of friendship and peace. But we have the evidence of the Russian Foreign Minister, Isvolsky, that the new grouping

of the Powers which resulted this year and the next by the union of Russia with the Dual Entente only caused Germany and the Kaiser to cling more firmly than ever to their Austrian ally, and to confirm the Kaiser's belief in the design of his enemies to isolate Germany (Siebert's *Aktenstücke*, 699–701, July 2 and November 12, 1909). How much reason there was for this belief was shown by the continued attempts by King Edward on the loyalty of the Austrian Emperor to the Triple Alliance. Prince Bülow took his habitual line of making light of the Agreement as not injurious to Germany (*Reden*, iii. 75–6). Even Professor Schiemann argued at the end of the year that in England's alliances and agreements Germany saw no danger to herself; that the French Entente made absolutely no change in the relations of the Powers; that the Mediterranean treaties and the alliances with Japan did not affect Germany; and that if, as a result of the Anglo-Russian agreement, England felt safer in India, and Russia had no English rivalry to fear in Central Asia, Germany welcomed the fact (vii. 418, December 25, 1907). But one may doubt whether this indifference was quite sincere. In certain German quarters the Convention appeared in the light of another link in the chain that was being tightened round Germany. And that it had an anti-German origin is proved by a letter of Count Benckendorff to Isvolsky, dated February 26, 1911, in which he wrote of it as indisputably intended to unite English and Russian endeavours in preventing Germany from getting a footing in Persia, lest her commercial interests there should assume a political character (*Siebert*, 348): a fear that governed all the negotiations about the Bagdad railway from 1907 onwards. It was said that the English Army was enraptured at the *entente* with Russia (*Schiemann*, vii. 323); but, if so, the rapture probably arose less from sheer love of Russia than from the opposite emotion towards Germany. Lord French was sent on a mission to Russia in October, where he visited several of the larger Russian towns; but he only went ostensibly as a tourist and to study military conditions, though it was not unreasonable

to guess that important military conversations relieved the tedium of his studies.

In the same month of October a remarkable article in the *Edinburgh Review* defended the project of the Bagdad railway, pointing out the immense benefit likely to accrue to the world from the probably consequent restoration of order and cultivation in the regions of the ancient Babylonian and Assyrian Empires; throwing just ridicule on the alarmist predictions raised by such books as Chéradame's *Question d'Orient* (1903) of a German occupation of Asiatic Turkey and of a German advance upon India; and advocating the allowance of a fair trial of the German experiment. But our cherished alarms about the safety of India were not to be dispersed in so easy a fashion, and the only apparent result of the article was the temporary satisfaction it gave in Germany (*Schiemann*, vii. 348).

Morocco remained through the year a permanent possibility of war. On May 1st Professor Schiemann wrote that nothing but ill-will could still maintain that Germany wished to adopt an attitude hostile to France; nothing was farther from her wish; she was resolved not to go beyond the Algeçiras Act, which meant, beyond the claim for economic equality. But she must protest against the error that she was in a position that compelled her to lean on France, or that France was in a position to impose conditions upon her (*Schiemann*, vii. 160–1). The rising about this time of Mulai Hafid, who proclaimed himself Sultan in place of his ten years younger brother, was rightly recognized as a highly dangerous event, but towards the end of May matters had changed for the better by the Sultan's recognition of the French claims for compensation, and by his taking in hand himself the suppression of the rising in Marakesch (*ib.* vii. 208–9). In July M. Pichon's declaration that France took her stand on the Algeçiras Act, and that there were no diplomatic troubles to fear, gave much relief; and the hope even gained ground in Germany that she and France might yet come to live at peace together, their conduct at the Hague Conference having shown that in

large questions of international politics it was possible for them to go hand in hand together (*ib.* vii. 291).

But the lull was of brief duration. August began with the murder of Europeans in Casablanca, and with a wild outburst of Islamitic fanaticism. Nothing had been done since the Act of Algeçiras to organize the police force in Casablanca in accordance with the Act. France and Spain sent ships and troops, and their action was regarded by all the Powers with pacifying unanimity (*ib.* vii. 303). The future depended on the wisdom and moderation of France, and for this hope great confidence was placed in M. Pichon. Germany, though regretting that France and Spain had not proceeded more rapidly with their police reforms at Casablanca, regarded the events with no uneasiness, though questioning whether the bombardment of open villages was a necessity of their war measures (*ib.* vii. 310). It was admitted that M. Pichon had been loyal to the Algeçiras Act, and it was hoped that eventually Germany and France would co-operate industrially in the country. But the trouble dragged on, and French influence extended no farther than French guns and French francs could reach (*ib.* vii. 325). The civil war between the brothers continued, to the great injury of trade, and with little prospect of a return to normal conditions. The French troops had soon spread inland from Casablanca, and by the end of the year there were over 10,000 French soldiers in Morocco ; for whom Morocco was required to pay, and to mortgage territory for repayment of a loan (*Reventlow*, 324).

The King and the Kaiser had met in mid-August at Wilhelmshöhe, and it was there probably arranged that the nephew should return his uncle's visit by coming to England in November. *The Times* showed its displeasure, reproaching Prince Bülow on October 10th with feigning a wish for an understanding with England whilst encouraging the reptile German Press in its attacks ; he had come to realize the strength of our position due to the Anglo-French *entente* and the Anglo-Russian agreement, and the unreadiness of the German Fleet. *The Times* hoped that

Berlin regretted its attitude in the Boer War; we were ready to forgive but not to forget, provided German repentance was sincere, and that could only be proved by advances to our friends the French. So far the virtuous Pecksniff of our Press; for which it was rebuked by our Liberal organs. The Kaiser and Kaiserin duly arrived in London on November 13th, whence they proceeded to Windsor Castle for a few days. Count Benckendorff informed Isvolsky on November 19th of the conversations there held about the Bagdad railway between the Kaiser and Baron Schoen on the one side and the English Ministers on the other. Such a railway, it was feared in Russia, would open up Persia to the political influence and to the commerce of Germany; England and France were equally hostile, and Isvolsky wished his best thanks conveyed to Sir E. Grey for his pro-Russian attitude in the matter (Siebert's *Aktenstücke*, 319). From Windsor the Kaiser proceeded to Highcliffe, near Bournemouth, for a few weeks, returning to Potsdam on December 14th. His reception in England left nothing to be desired in the welcome accorded to him by all classes on all occasions. There were the inevitable banquetings and speech-makings; and the City of London presented him with an Address in a finely wrought golden casket. But the speech that made most impression was his own at the Guildhall on November 13th. Recalling the speech he had made in the same place, sixteen years before, in 1891, when he had alluded to the historic friendship between England and Germany, which had so often united both countries in the causes of liberty and of justice, and had added with marked emphasis, "My aim above all is the maintenance of peace," he hoped that history would do him the justice of saying that he had remained true to that undertaking ever since.

It was thought that the Kaiser's visit was of little or no political importance, inasmuch as the German Chancellor had not accompanied his master to England. But as a matter of fact the whole of the Kaiser's three weeks in England were spent in constant and "feverish" efforts

for an Anglo-German *rapprochement*, at the expense of the Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian Ententes. So wrote Count Benckendorff on February 3, 1909, who adds the evidence in a letter of November 25, 1908, that in these efforts the Kaiser found himself up against a wall in London (*Siebert*, 717, 721). The subservience of our diplomacy to the interests of France and Russia admitted of no modification ; nor is it a fair matter for surprise that the Kaiser, in his letters to the King, often questioned in terms that called down upon him his uncle's rebukes the friendliness of the King's Ministers and of the British Press. Yet the visit was not without good effects : in Germany it was thought to have been even more beneficial than the visit of the English journalists to Berlin in May (*Schiemann*, viii. 5) ; so that Lord Morley was undoubtedly right in alluding to the Kaiser's visit as " a great event " since it " would much improve the chances of a little decent calm all over Europe, which sadly needed it." Lord Morley saw much of the Kaiser at Windsor, and was surprised by his gaiety, freedom, and good humour ; adding that the one chief impression that he had made on everybody's mind was the sincerity of his wish for peace and his will to make it (*Recollections*, ii. 237–9). The Kaiser agreed with Lord Morley on the good effect of his visit. Writing to the Czar on December 28, 1907, he thought that he had " removed many courses [causes] of misunderstanding and of distrust, so that the atmosphere is cleared and the pressure on the safety valve relieved." But the Kaiser's quite private and confidential piece of news to the Czar, that London was getting very nervous about Japan, fearing the dilemma, in case of a Japanese-American war, of either having to side with America and so risk the loss of India, or of quarrelling with America, shows how charged with electricity the atmosphere still remained. The Kaiser thought that Japan, in spite of our alliance, was quietly undermining India, which perhaps she would attack before attacking the Philippines ; British naval and military officers had spoken to him with open disgust of the alliance with Japan. Nor can it be

denied that a recent Imperialist speech of Count Okuma, an ex-Premier of Japan, in which he spoke of 300 millions of oppressed Indians as looking for Japan's protection, had produced a great sensation, which the Kaiser compared to the effect of "a Shimose shell" in London. This was his *secret information* for the Czar *personally*, so that he might have his eyes open for possible developments (*Letter* 58).

It seems undoubted that the Kaiser's visit to Windsor did much to improve our strained relations with Germany. Professor Schiemann expressed with grace and gratitude his country's sincere thankfulness "to our English cousins" for their friendly reception. And the better tone of the English Press, mainly of the Liberal Press, gave much satisfaction in Germany (*ib.* vii. 368, 406, November 20th). The *National Review*, however, continued irreconcilable, publishing in its November number an article entitled "Invasion," from the pen of the Military Correspondent of *The Times* (Colonel Repington), full of idle alarms, and insistent on our taking the initiative with our Navy. This visit of the Kaiser to his uncle at Windsor was the only visit to Windsor during the King's reign; so that Mr. Legge's incredible story of the King's knocking the Kaiser down at Windsor Castle must have occurred on this occasion or not at all (*King Edward, the Kaiser, and the War*, 51); and so far the name of Mr. Legge's informant has remained undisclosed. Mr. Legge's statement may be true that occasionally the King's "indignation at some unlooked-for occurrences was so great that it momentarily overmastered him"; but only the evidence of an eye-witness could claim credence for such an illustration of the assertion.

It was fortunate that Sir John Fisher consistently threw ridicule on the naval scare as sustained by such organs as the *National Review*. Few of Sir John's services to his country were greater than his protection of the King from the naval alarmists, who kept the nation in a chronic fever about our liability to invasion. His speech at the Guildhall on November 9th poured scorn on the popular delusion; and it accorded with what he wrote to Lord Esher on

October 7, 1907: "In regard to the Invasion Bogey, about which I am now writing to you, how curious it is that from the German Emperor downwards their breasts were stricken with fear that *we* were going to attack them" (*Memories*, 181–2). And considering that on August 22, 1907, the Admiralty official figures could point to 123 British destroyers against Germany's 48, and to 40 submarines on our side to one on Germany's; and considering that Sir George Clarke, Secretary of the Imperial Defence Committee, had declared our Navy to be stronger than it had ever been in all our previous history, the prevalent alarm seemed to Sir John fictitious. If he admitted the necessity of a predominant Navy, it was not only for the purpose of keeping open our communications with our dependencies, but for the purpose of "allaying the fears of the old women of both sexes (to use a phrase applied by Lord St. Vincent to the alarmists of his day) in regard to the invasion of England or to the invasion of the Colonies" (*Memories*, 181). Lord St. Vincent had wittily said, in answer to a question of the possibility of an invasion, that, though he could not answer as to an invasion on land, he could positively assert that it would never take place by sea; and Sir John was of the same mind. Nevertheless he believed in the reality of the German menace and in the necessity of meeting it by a counter-menace; he confessed himself as belonging neither to the diplomatists, whom he considered senile, nor to the politicians, whom he thought liars; but he professed himself of "the common-sense view" that our intervention in "any very great Continental struggle" would be most unwise; he presumably did not realize how deeply we had been bound by our secret diplomacy to the fortunes of France. He relates an incident of a memorable interview between himself, Lord Esher, and the King on board the royal yacht when the King "stamped on the idea (that then enthused the War Office mind) of England being once more engaged in a great Continental war" (*ib.* 211–12). The King did not share the War Office wish for war, but the question was whether the

diplomacy he pursued would not rather produce than avert it.

The King had supported Sir John Fisher in his schemes of naval reform against all opposition, and in return few men of the time exercised more influence over the King than Sir John. A letter from the King received in December, 1908, the happy recipient spoke of as "a dear letter," and commented on the writer, "Isn't he a sweet!" (*Memories*, 187). Their epistolary correspondence was constant, and it is greatly to be deplored that Lord Fisher burnt all but a few of the royal letters he had received from the King. In so doing he says that he followed the advice and the *example* of Lord Knollys (*ib.* 2). Blunt was informed by Lady C. that Lord Knollys "was left heir to all the King's papers and correspondence, and knew absolutely everything of the King's secrets, having been entrusted with the keys, while he lived, of every box. Most of these secrets will die with Lord Knollys" (*Diaries*, ii. 325–6). Considering how much light this correspondence would have thrown on the actions and opinions of the King during his reign, such wholesale destruction of it is of the nature of a sin against history. For it conveys the impression of a deliberate wish to conceal the truth.

Soon after his speech in April, Prince Bülow had fainted in the Reichstag, and been incapacitated from attending the Reichstag till November. Towards the end of that month he made some important speeches. In reference to the moral scandals in the higher regions of German society people had begun to talk of a Camarilla that ruled the Court, and that had been the cause of the dissolution of the Reichstag at the end of 1906. He not only denied that anything of the sort had happened, he himself having recommended the dissolution to the Federated Governments, but also strongly denied the existence of any such thing as a Camarilla at all (*Reden*, iii. 65–70). He endeavoured to allay the nervousness that had arisen during the year from the signs of a *rapprochement* between England and Russia by arguing that their agreement of August 31st bore no

hostility to Germany, as was shown by the meeting of the Kaiser with the Czar, and with the meetings between the Kaiser and King Edward. He spoke also pacifically about Morocco: he was thankful that France and Spain had informed the German Government of their intended action for repressing the Casablanca disorders, nor would Germany in any way oppose them (*ib.* iii. 72). But his references to Russia failed to satisfy; his professed indifference to her growing friendship with England was thought to cover defeat and disappointment; he was but resigning himself to a danger he had failed to avert (*Reventlow*, 312). It seemed another step in the policy of making a ring of the Powers against Germany; British policy for the last few years had been opposed to Germany in Europe and in all quarters of the earth, and King Edward's clever and unremitting schemes were in unison with the feelings of far the greater part of the British people (*ib.* 303).

Count Reventlow's idea of King Edward as the prime author of the whole English anti-German policy of these years was almost universal in Germany. But it is curious to find that in certain circles of France a similar or greater mistrust of him prevailed than even in Germany. This is proved by a book called *La France Conquise: Edward VII et Clemenceau*, by M. Emile Flourens, at one time Foreign Minister of France. His theory was that all that happened during the King's reign was due to the personal initiative of the King. According to him, it was the King who, wishing to remove Russia from our commercial and naval path, first caused Japan to make war on Russia (a variant of the *Morning Post* story that it was the Kaiser who lured the Russian Emperor to destruction by pushing him into war with Japan, December 18, 1920), and then, to complete the ruin of Russia, stirred up the Russian Revolution: and all this through the financial aid of the Jews in London. Having thus disposed of Russia, he proceeded to dispose of his nephew the Kaiser by raising the Moroccan question as an apple of discord between France and Germany. Edward VII, thought M. Flourens, reigned in London,

but he governed in Paris, using M. Clemenceau as his pro-consul in France to execute his designs and desires over France and Europe. But for all this the writer vouchsafed not a word of evidence, and it would seem as likely that the King fell under the attraction of M. Clemenceau and M. Delcassé as that he directed these statesmen. King Edward was doubtless a strong Imperialist, but that he was so Machiavellian as M. Flourens supposes requires a great deal of proof in the place of none at all.

CHAPTER VIII

1908

THE MEETING AT REVAL AND THE TRIPLE ENTENTE

THE new year began badly. The previous year had seemed to Germany as if an avalanche of coalitions was joining forces for her overthrow, under the direction of England (*Schiemann*, viii. 1). The murder of the King of Portugal and of his son, the Crown Prince, on February 1st, was a grievous sequel to the enthusiasm with which the King had so recently been welcomed and fêted in London ; and a sign of the disturbed state of the European world. Macedonia remained unpacified, and the outrages of brigand bands mocked the desire for law and order. And in Ireland the practice of cattle-driving reached such dimensions that Mr. Birrell, the Chief Secretary, had to adopt an adamantine attitude against the clamour for a renewal of the Crimes Act.

At home the year was one of exceptional futility. To little purpose did the Liberal Government set itself to the task of the reforms expected of it. Only the Old Age Pensions Act succeeded in passing the political and social barriers placed in its way. Months of weary debate in Parliament and of acrimonious discussion in the country were spent over an Education Bill which had in the end to be withdrawn. But not even a Bill for bringing the world to an end could have encountered more opposition than a Bill for restricting the abuses of the drink traffic. The Licensing Bill found fiercer enemies in the brewing industry than even the Education Bill found among the clergy. The Peckham Election in March was a long orgy of clamour,

to which only the pencil of a Hogarth could have done justice; and the return of the Unionist candidate foreshadowed the Bill's ultimate fate, when on November 29th it was scornfully vetoed in the Lords by a majority of 272 to 96. And whilst the question of the proper place of a Second Chamber in our political system was thus intensified, the proceedings of the militant suffrage women to obtain admission to the Constitution kept up a state of feverish effervescence which added greatly to the confusion of the time. Such a turmoil was too much for the wearied Prime Minister, who resigned his office on April 5th and his life on April 22nd; his pacifist tendencies consorted ill with the pro-French policy at all costs which was that of Sir E. Grey at the Foreign Office, and the King immediately summoned Mr. Asquith to Biarritz to entrust this prominent leader of the Liberal Imperialist Party with the task of steering the straightest course he could through the growing anarchy of the time.

For if the political weather-glass pointed to "stormy" at home, it pointed still more in that direction abroad. Of the two opposing currents, making respectively for war or peace with Germany, the former flowed in 1908 with accelerated speed towards its end. The year had begun ominously with a great speech by M. Delcassé on January 24th, in which, after a silence which had remained unbroken since his resignation in 1905, he advised his countrymen to strengthen their alliances, and to maintain an Army that was adequate to their needs. The meaning of this advice was as clearly understood in Germany as it was in France or England or Russia. It was a summons to the friendly Powers to prepare for war; and Lord Haldane's Territorial Army scheme, and the scare about the Navy, increased the general uneasiness. Delcassé stood strongly for the Anglo-French-Russian Entente—professedly for defensive purposes, of course; but, as the best defensive is to take the offensive, potential enemies draw little comfort from such professions. Lord Curzon expressed a gratification that was wider than his own that a policy of understanding and alliances had

been substituted for one of splendid isolation, and attributed the change, as all knew or dimly apprehended, to the influence and political sagacity of the Sovereign. Unfortunately Germany rightly read hostility to herself in all these *ententes*, and expressed her feelings in such a sentence as this: "The man whose restless occupation at the present moment threatens the peace of Europe is more and more plainly none other than the King of England." Neutral opinion took the same direction. Thus Baron Greindl writes on January 27th, in reference to M. Delcassé's warlike speech: "The policy which King Edward has organized under the pretext of protecting Europe against an imaginary German danger has conjured up a French danger which is only too real, and which threatens us (Belgium) first and foremost." And again on July 18th: "The personal policy of the King of England is frankly hostile to Germany." This feeling or belief remained the undercurrent of the whole of the King's reign, and it was more than any civilities between monarch and monarch had the power to overcome.

The Press, in unison with Mr. Balfour's alarmist speeches in Parliament during the month of March, did all it could to keep alive the war atmosphere, by exaggerated accounts of the ultimate results of the German Navy Act of 1897, and by such scaring articles as "The German Danger," or "German Challenge to British Naval Supremacy," although the German Government had disclaimed all attempts at any such rivalry (*Ann. Reg.*, 1908, 292). Sincerely desirous for peace as were both the King and the Kaiser, the Press wielded the larger power; so true is it, as Sir E. Grey said at Scarborough on November 20, 1908, that "half the difficulties of foreign policy arose from the ingenuity of the Press in different countries in imputing motives to each other's Governments." The Kaiser, moved to irritation by the attitude of our Press, and hoping to counteract its effects, decided to intervene personally with a letter to Lord Tweedmouth, the First Lord of the Admiralty. This famous letter, written on February 14th, was received on February 18th, and came to the knowledge of Colonel

Repington from sources he never revealed in the last week of February. Suspecting the letter as designed to effect a reduction of our Naval Estimates, after consultation with Mr. Buckle, *The Times* editor, the Colonel wrote a letter to *The Times* on March 6th, urging that this fearful letter from the Kaiser should be laid before Parliament. But there was no publication of the letter itself till it appeared in the *Morning Post* of October 30, 1914, and subsequently in Colonel Repington's *Vestigia* (287–91). It assuredly contained nothing that in the least justified the commotion stirred up by it in the country by the Editor of *The Times* and its Military Correspondent.

The Kaiser, asking leave to intrude for a few moments on Lord Tweedmouth's " precious time," went on to express the hope that some explanation from himself about the German naval programme would help to prevent this programme from being used by political parties in England as a bogey to assist their ends. It was *nonsensical* and *untrue* that the intended Navy was meant to challenge British supremacy. It was built *against* nobody at all, but solely *for* Germany's own needs in relation to her growing trade. Many of Germany's ships had become obsolete with time, and she was committed to a wholesale rebuilding of her entire Navy, not to an increase of its units. He deprecated Germany being alone kept in view in all the discussions about the two-Power standard. It was " very galling to the Germans to see their country continually held up as the sole menace and danger to Britain by the whole Press of the different contending parties, considering that other countries were building too, and there were even larger fleets than the German." Permanent mischief might result from these anti-German articles by giving rise to retaliatory wishes in the German Naval League. Lord Esher's phrase in a letter to *The Times* (February 6th), in which he said that " every German, from the Emperor down to the last man, wished for the downfall of Sir John Fisher," he rebuked as " a piece of unmitigated balderdash." It had created " immense merriment " in Germany, where no one dreamt

of wishing to influence Great Britain in the choice of her servants ; such a notion was preposterous, and he repudiated such a calumny. This perpetual quoting of the German danger was " utterly unworthy of the great British nation, with its world-wide Empire and its mighty Navy." He wrote as an " ardent admirer " of this Navy, as one who wished it all success, and who was proud to wear the uniform of a British Admiral, as conferred on him by the late Queen. In conclusion, the German Naval Bill was not aimed at England, nor was it a challenge to British supremacy, which would remain unchallenged for generations to come.

The increase of the German Navy, which was interpreted in England as obviously meant for our invasion, was also open to the interpretation that it was the result of a similar fear in Germany of our intentions. Thus Baron Greindl wrote on February 2nd from Berlin : " No one here has ever entertained the absurd and impracticable idea of an aggression against England ; but every one fears an English aggression. This is the reason why the Reichstag has agreed without murmuring to an enormous increase of expenditure for the Imperial Navy." And on March 28th, in reference to the financial strain of the Navy Bill : " The sacrifice was only accepted because the Government considers itself obliged to take every precaution with a view to guarding the country against a possible aggression on the part of England " (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, 43 and 44). In the panic produced by our scare-writers about the German danger this was an aspect of the case that never received any consideration, justified though it was by so much that was written or spoken on our side.

The Chancellor followed the Kaiser in a very similar speech, delivered in the Reichstag on March 24th. The Tweedmouth letter, he said, was one that might have been written by any real friend of better relations between the two countries : a merely private letter, such as was within the right of any Sovereign to send. It was a coarse and unjustifiable imputation (as had been made by *The Times*) to represent it as an attempt to influence in the interest of

Germany the Minister responsible for the British Naval Estimates, or to encroach clandestinely on the internal affairs of Great Britain. The Kaiser was the last man to think that any patriotic British Minister would accept foreign advice on the Naval Budget. And Germany claimed the same right of non-interference. In face of the ceaseless attacks which ascribed to Germany aggressive designs against England the defensive character of German naval policy could not be too often nor too strongly insisted on: Germany wished to live at peace and quiet with England, and therefore felt bitterly the habit of a section of English writers to keep on harping on the "German Danger," although the British Fleet was many times stronger than the German, and other countries too had stronger fleets, and were building them with no less ardour than Germany. It was Germany, ever again Germany, and only Germany, against which public opinion across the Channel was whetted by a reckless polemic, and in the interest of the general tranquillity of the world such a polemic should cease. As Germany never deprecated British shipbuilding as a menace to herself, so it was unfair that German shipbuilding should be treated as a challenge to England. The Kaiser deemed it an honour to be an Admiral of the British Navy, and was a great admirer of the political culture of the British people and of its Navy, and in this the Kaiser was in unison with his Chancellor and with the whole German nation. But he was sure that the excellent treatment of the incident by the British Parliament (March 6th and 7th) would prevent any disturbance of the friendly relations between England and Germany (*Reden*, iii. 118–19).

Happily this had been the case. The great sensation caused in England by the letter soon subsided. Lord Tweedmouth described the letter fairly as "very friendly in tone and quite informal." The German Foreign Office semi-officially disclaimed any wish on the writer's part to interfere with British naval policy; and Lord Rosebery, on March 9th, threw all the cold water he could on the Jingo plot. Absolutely insane inferences he justly said,

the course of which he urged on His Majesty the policy of "Copenhagening the German Fleet *à la* Nelson," and lamented that we had no Pitt or Bismarck to order so monstrous a proceeding. Sir John was fond of harping on what he conceived that Pitt would have done, and this same year he sent the King certain quotations from Pitt with regard to dealing with a possible enemy before his strength had reached maturity. As Germany had always expressed her intention to "make even England's mighty Navy hesitate" at sea, it seemed simply a sagacious act on our part to seize the German Fleet, when it was so easy to do so, in the manner he had sketched out to the King. He did not consider it "a very gentlemanly sort of thing" on Nelson's part to "go and destroy the Danish Fleet at Copenhagen," but the strongest reason was always the best, and Sir John was much disappointed that his plan was "damned" by the disapproval of the King and of other authorities. It was therefore in vain that on March 14, 1908, he wrote to the King that, since our having eventually to fight Germany was as certain as anything could be, because otherwise it was impossible for Germany to expand commercially, our attack on her must be "quick and overwhelming," or Germany would close the Baltic against us as effectually as Turkey closed the Black Sea against us by her possession of the Dardanelles. It behoved us, therefore, to have both Russia and Turkey upon our side, and to suffer Russia to fortify the Aland Islands (*Memories*, iii.). One can understand that, as these views of Sir John Fisher were well known to the Kaiser and his Ministers, as has been previously shown, Sir John did not enjoy the same popularity in Germany that he did in England. It was this knowledge that was one of the main conditions of the war-feeling that raged all through the King's reign. The alternative plan to that of making war in time of peace, and without a quarrel to justify it, was to concentrate our whole naval strength in the North Sea, and this was done so unostentatiously that but for an article in the *Scientific Annual* by Captain Mahan it might have escaped the notice of the world that

88 per cent. of British naval guns were pointed against Germany.

At that time Germany had three submarines against "a mass of effective ones" on our side; we had seven Dreadnoughts, Germany as yet none. So that Sir John Fisher could reasonably write to Lord Esher on May 5, 1908: "The Navy can take on all the navies of the world put together" (*ib.* 186). As for the scare of invasion, he knew the nonsense of it, and wrote: "I am emphatically of opinion that no raid of any kind (that is, landing of troops) is feasible with all our late developments, which are developing every day. . . . So don't let us get a scare over 24,000 men coming unobserved" (*ib.* 188). But the scare continued to be cultivated.

Another unfortunate incident of this summer was the removal of Sir F. Lascelles from the British Embassy at Berlin. For fifteen years he had striven to improve English and German relations, and he enjoyed the confidence both of the Kaiser and of his Government. But he left Berlin in the summer, to return in the autumn to present his letters of recall. His departure was "only apparently a voluntary one," wrote Baron Greindl on July 18, 1908, despite German efforts for his remaining, as well as of his own strong wish to remain. The only reason the Baron could imagine for his removal was that "the zeal displayed by him in view of removing misunderstandings which he considered absurd and highly disadvantageous for both countries was not in keeping with the political ideas of his Sovereign" (*Belgian Diplomatic Documents*, 50). Blunt was told the same thing: "Lascelles is out of favour now with the King, as being too German in his sentiments." It was also said that he was held "responsible for the Kaiser's Wilhelm's unfriendly attitude"; and the two statements seem hard to reconcile (*Diaries*, ii. 213).

Anxieties about possible German ambitions in the Baltic and the North Sea probably explain the visit paid by King Edward, after his return from his annual visit to the Continent, accompanied by the Queen and Princess Victoria,

and by a large suite, to the three northern Courts of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway between April 21st and May 2nd. The visit to Copenhagen, from April 21st to 26th, coincided on April 23rd with the signature at St. Petersburg of the Baltic Convention between Russia, Germany, Sweden and Denmark to maintain the territorial *status quo* as regarded the Baltic, and with another Convention signed at Berlin between Great Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Holland, sanctioning similar principles about the North Sea. All these State visits were as like to one another as one penguin is to another. There was the usual tale of gay bunting, of gala dinners, of operas, and of friendly toasts between the different monarchs. Tne King, with his usual felicity of phrase, expressed his grateful thanks to Frederick VII of Denmark, to Gustavus V of Sweden, to King Haakon of Norway; to the latter expressing the hope that the sport of salmon-fishing, which Englishmen shared with Norwegians, might ever remain as an emblem of peace between the two countries, and that the peace of Norway might be permanently preserved. The visit to Gustavus V at Stockholm, from April 26th to 28th, was the first visit ever paid by a British to a Swedish Sovereign; and both this visit and that to King Haakon at Christiania, from April 29th to May 2nd, were hailed as conducing to European peace. But all these *ententes* for the maintenance of existing territorial arrangements were only indications of the general feeling of insecurity which prevailed, and of the apprehension of some impending disturbance.

To avert such disturbance some laudable efforts were made. Pacifists in England and Germany, perceiving the obvious drift of the growing friction between their countries, did their best to counteract it by schemes for the promotion of mutual friendship. From May 17th to 23rd a number of German burgomasters and municipal councillors were entertained by the Lord Mayor, welcomed by representative members of the Government, and received by the King at Buckingham Palace. They were followed the next week by a deputation of German ecclesiastics, Protestant and

Catholic, who in their turn were entertained by the Lord Mayor, and privileged to listen to speeches of the usual type from the Archbishop of Westminster and his Grace of Canterbury. They were received at the House of Commons by Mr. Runciman, and Mr. Lloyd George subsequently promised a grant of public money for the promotion of peace and goodwill in Europe by similar international hospitalities (*Ann. Reg.*, 1908, 121). But what could money do for peace against the methods used for the cultivation of its opposite? It was so easy to feed public alarm with unverifiable rumours. Who, for instance, could fail to quake when it was intimated in *The Times* (July 13), that the Secretary for War was to be asked whether he could say anything of a Staff ride through England "organized by a Foreign Power," or whether the Chief Constables of the Eastern Counties had any knowledge of foreign spies at work in England? In July *The Times* and the *Standard* fanned into a flame this scare of German spies; as if any country in Europe was free from the subterranean work of these well-paid agents of every great military State (*Schiemann* viii. 278). Another scare was started by the London correspondent of the *Novya Vremya*, headed "A German landing in Scotland"; according to which a suspicious stranger, landing in Scotland, confessed, under the influence of drink, that he belonged to the Prussian General Staff, and that his inquiries about roads and footpaths were connected with a plan for the landing of a German army in Scotland as a preliminary to a march upon London. A fortnight earlier Mr. Garvin's paper, the *Observer*, had reported the activity of German officers on the South-East Coasts of England (*ib.* viii. 126–7). Rumours of this sort were greedily swallowed, and, if the fears caused by them were not widespread, they provided exciting "copy" for a section of the Press (*Ann. Reg.*, 1908, 162). In any case the continual dripping of such hints of terror into the public ear had the intended effect of representing Germany as an enemy State with which sooner or later we were bound to be at war. It was by such a process of national self-

suggestion that war ultimately developed from imagination into actuality.

President Fallières, accompanied by M. Pichon, the Foreign Minister, paid a State visit to London from May 25th to 29th. There was much talk at this time of changing the *entente* with France into a definite alliance, and M. Tardieu, who reflected M. Clemenceau's ideas in the *Temps*, caused some sensation by an article in that paper to the effect that France could not undertake the risk of an alliance unless we adopted universal military service, or organized a professional army fit for prompt service on the Continent. The trouble in Morocco continued. M. Clemenceau disclaimed all intention on the part of France of suppressing anarchy over the whole of Morocco, or of entering upon further conquests or expeditions; and M. Pichon gave explanations of French action in that country which seemed in Germany to be contradicted by facts. When Mulai Hafid, one of the contending brothers, decided to send two deputies to Berlin to represent his case, the *Temps* issued a warning to Germany against their reception: a piece of assumption, wrote Schiemann, that passed all bounds; how or whether these messengers were received was no concern of France (viii. 167). They arrived on May 9th; but the incident showed how Morocco was still poisoning the relations of France and Germany. The German Government, it was said, was careful to pretend to believe the most improbable assertions of M. Pichon and of the French Ambassador in Berlin, M. Jules Cambon, "so as not to be obliged to reopen the Moroccan question" (*Baron Greindl*, May 10th). The French, English, and Russian Press kept up a vigorous campaign against Germany, especially the French *Temps*. Feeling remained excited, and it was doubtless against the danger of the coalition thus prepared that the German Kaiser, and other German Princes, visited the Austrian Emperor at Schönbrunn on May 7th, returning to Berlin on May 20th. For war might any day test the loyalty to Germany of her Austrian ally, and the friendship needed to be reinvigorated.

Following President Fallières' visit to London, and doubtless connected with it in the interests of the Triple Entente, came the visit of the King and Queen at Whitsuntide to Reval to meet the Czar : a visit, says Lord Redesdale, " purely dictated by family affection," without " the most distant suspicion of politics attached to it," but to which the German Press took exception, " as evidence of a dark and sinister anti-Teuton plot " (ii. 766). This, however, runs counter to other evidence ; for how could politics not be attached to a visit which, as Sir E. Grey said, was desired to have the political effect of improving our relations with Russia ? The most frightful things were being done in Russia at the time : lynchings, tortures, and burnings alive (*Schiemann*, viii. 182–3) ; and so prevalent was the terror that it was not deemed safe to invite the King to St. Petersburg (*ib.* viii. 254). Never before had an English Sovereign visited a Russian Czar, nor was the innovation suffered without much Liberal and Labour opposition in Parliament. No Cabinet Minister was to attend the King ; only Sir Charles Hardinge, permanent Under-Secretary to the Foreign Office, as one of the King's suite. Sir E. Grey assured the House of Commons that no negotiations were on foot for any treaty or convention with Russia, nor would any be initiated during the visit (*Ann. Reg.*, 1908, 121), but he admitted that the visit would have a political effect, and was desired to have one, namely, the improvement of our relations with Russia ; it was " a policy of peace." But desirable as was such an end, increased enmity with Germany might be a dear price to pay for it. Sir John Fisher was to Germany as a red rag to a bull, and his accompaniment of the King did not contribute to her appeasement.

The two monarchs met on June 9th. Nicholas II graciously presented Sir John Fisher, Sir John French, and Count Benckendorff with the Alexander Nevsky Order, and the King made the Czar an Admiral of the British Navy. But all this was the mere surface of things. The real meaning of them lurked below. For better or worse,

the visit sealed the Triple Entente; "the realization," says Mr. Legge, "of a scheme long planned by" the King, and worked out by him, when Prince of Wales, with the Marquis de Breteuil (*King Edward in His True Colours*, 171–3). Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, was naturally of the party, nor needed the introduction to the King, as related in the newspapers; for Isvolsky himself speaks of the long interviews he had had with the King when at the Russian Embassy at Copenhagen, where they settled between them the bases of the Anglo-Russian *entente*, begun in 1907 and now extended (*Memoirs*, 20). In the long talk that the King had with the Russian Prime Minister, Stolypin, the latter was described in the *Daily Telegraph* of June 11, 1908, as "literally fascinated" by the King; "not only what he said, but the manner in which he expressed it, bore the peculiar impression of an artist in international politics, whom Europe is now come to regard as the first statesman in Europe."

But perhaps the many conversations that Stolypin had with Sir John Fisher were of more significance. Stolypin expressed the wish that England would prevent the Baltic from becoming a German lake, adding that he himself was devoting his life to making the Russian frontier secure against a German attack (*Memories*, 237). Henceforth the Triple Entente was ranged against the Triple Alliance in scarcely veiled antagonism. Prince Orloff thought that the King's visit had changed the atmosphere of Russian feeling towards us from those of suspicion to those of cordial trust (*ib.* 231).

According to M. Victor Bérard, in the *Revue de Paris*, the authors of the Triple Entente were Marie Federovna, the Dowager Empress of Russia, M. Paul Cambon, M. Delcassé, Camille Barrère, and King Edward (Legge, *More About King Edward*, 25). A conversation at the time between Sir Charles Hardinge and Isvolsky shows the force of our drift towards Russia. Sir Charles repeated several times the opinion that, if Germany's naval preparations continued, Europe would have a most anxious time in seven

or eight years, when Russia would inevitably be the arbiter of the situation: therefore England's desire was that Russia should become as strong as possible both on land and sea (*Siebert*, 778). When *The Times* correspondent suggested that at Reval the diplomatists talked about Turkey and Macedonia, and then went on to say that "perhaps the chief subject was the present *status quo* and the future development of the relations between the members of the Triple Entente and Germany," there was little need of the word "perhaps."

A letter by Isvolsky, dated December 3, 1908, bears witness to the disquieting effect which was produced in Germany by the suspicion that this Anglo-Russian *entente* covered a Triple Alliance, concluded or to be concluded, against herself (*ib.* 780). Count Reventlow thought that the agreement between England and Russia was to the effect that they should unite with France and the Balkan States for a war of destruction against Germany and Austria, as soon as Russia had reorganized her Army; which the Russian military experts put at six or eight years, i.e. in 1914 or 1916 (352). So relations became worse instead of better. "Hatred of the German Empire," wrote the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, "blazed forth as though a fuse had been lighted"; whilst a German paper declared that "a mighty coalition with pronounced anti-German tendencies will henceforth confront us in all questions of world-wide policy."

But some steps were taken to counteract this dangerous consequence of the new *entente*. Sir E. Grey, on July 27th, used words of balm when, in answer to Sir C. Dilke, he disclaimed any political scheme on our part for the isolation of Germany. And on July 28th the King made use of some admirable words in answer to an Address from the Seventeenth Universal Peace Congress: "Rulers and statesmen," he said, "can set before themselves no higher aim than the promotion of mutual good understanding and cordial friendship among the nations of the world," and that to do so would always be his own object. Strange, then, to find

both the King and the Cabinet within a few weeks threatening the Kaiser with war if he again gave such a cause of offence as he had given in the Tweedmouth letter!

Nevertheless Germany felt herself left out in the cold, and refused to be comforted. President Fallières followed the King in paying visits to the three Scandinavian Courts, and to Nicholas II at Reval on July 27th, and it was perhaps in the hope of minimizing the bad effect of these English and French visits that the King, on his way to Marienbad, spent that 11th of August with his nephew at Cronberg. The newspapers told how the German school-children cheered the two monarchs as they drove in the same motor-car from the station. And there were the usual Press comments, which said so much and yet so little. The Kaiser, writing to the Czar on August 18th, told him of his uncle's good humour, and how he talked about Turkey, thinking she was best left alone to organize herself, and thus relieving the Powers of the projected reforms: "which seemed to relieve him visibly." The Kaiser seemed to bear his Russian cousin no ill-will for the welcome he had given his enemies at Reval. And the Czar was always all things to all men.

That same evening the King proceeded to Ischl on a visit to the Austrian Emperor, with whom he had long been on the best of terms, and who is said to have kept him for years well informed on the political situation in Vienna (Legge's *King Edward in His True Colours*, 197). It was believed that since 1903 the King had tried to detach Austria from her German alliance, and to get Francis Joseph to persuade the German Kaiser to restrict his shipbuilding programme (*Reventlow*, 353). At Ischl Sir Charles Hardinge had an interview with the Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Arenthal; but though their conversations had possibly the good intention of a pacifying effect, it was to appear within less than two months how ineffective they were for that purpose.

At Marienbad the King met Sir John Fisher (*Memories*, 231), and on August 26th he was visited by his old friend

M. Clemenceau, the French Premier, and on another day by Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister. The same motives of health and pleasure may have drawn to the same place these rulers of the fate of Europe, but it looked as if their meeting at Marienbad was a sequel to their meeting at Reval. As of course no minutes were taken of their conversations, the outside world, including Germany, was left to its own conclusions.

Mr. Churchill, then President of the Board of Trade, tried in a speech at Swansea on August 15th to allay the growing anti-German agitation. He repudiated the idea of an inevitable German war; deplored the provocative language of Lord Cromer, and of Mr. Blatchford in the *Clarion*; declared that England and Germany had no cause of quarrel, and that the German war party did not exceed a negligible 10,000 adherents. The Kaiser's speech at Strasburg on August 30th seemed to be a sort of acceptance of the olive-branch thus thrown out from our side; being pitched in a correspondingly pacific tone. He declared his deep conviction that the peace of Europe was in no danger; for the princes and statesmen of Europe "knew and felt that they were responsible to God for the lives and prosperity of the people entrusted to their leadership": a sentiment identical with that attributed by Sir Sidney Lee to King Edward VII, who in his later years is said to have grown "keenly alive to the sinfulness of provoking war lightly, and to the obligation that lay on rulers of only appealing to its arbitrament in the last resort." If they differed in other respects, uncle and nephew agreed in this sense of their duty: a great advance on the moral feeling of their ancestors. The Kaiser went on to say that Germany was resolved to keep her armed forces at a high level, though without any menace to other Powers, and to develop them as circumstances required without favour or injury to anyone (*Ann. Reg.*, 1908, 296).

Nevertheless the war tension prevailed over all assurances of the Kaiser and the Chancellor of their pacific aims. It was easier to evoke the war spirit than to exorcise

it. The Navy League school in Germany kept the belief alive that France and England were seeking to isolate Germany, if not contemplating an actual attack upon her. This was as reasonable as the idea that Germany was meaning to invade us. And several incidents increased the irritation against Germany. There was the too hurried recognition by her of Mulai Hafid as Sultan of Morocco, though France and Spain, with their mandate under the Act of Algeçiras, had notified her that such recognition must depend on Mulai's acceptance of the conditions imposed upon his brother. Germany's intervention was ignored, nor was Mulai recognized till after his acceptance of the Franco-Spanish conditions.

Then came in September the Casablanca incident, when the French captured some deserters from the Foreign Legion whom the German Consulate had assisted to escape. For some time things looked threatening. Germany, whilst offering to censure her Consul, demanded an apology; and on France's refusing and suggesting arbitration, she demanded that apology should precede arbitration, and so insisted for a month, when her proposal that both sides should first express regret for the incident closed it without that appeal to the sword which at one time seemed imminent. Count Reventlow declares that Great Britain had resolved to go to war in the event of Germany's not giving way at all (394).

The autumn continued full of surprises and alarms. To the surprise of Europe occurred on July 22nd the revolution of the Young Turks, followed next day by the proclamation of a Constitution, which the Sultan accepted, and which culminated on December 1st in the opening of a Turkish Parliament. This swift and mild revolution gave general satisfaction, and caused Greeks and Servians, Bulgarians, Turks, and Rumanians to lay aside their incessant warfare and to fraternize in a most pleasing manner.

But one important consequence or sequel of this great event was the annexation on October 4th by Austria of the long-occupied provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

and the next day Bulgaria declared her independence of Turkey. As both of these events ignored the Treaty of Berlin, they naturally portended trouble. The annexed provinces being mostly inhabited by Servians, Servia clamoured for war, and in Russia public indignation rose to fever heat. Yet only a few weeks earlier Isvolsky had declared, after interviews with Count Arenthal at Buchlau on September 15th and with Signor Tittoni at Dosio on September 29th, that there was complete identity of views between Russia, Austria, and Italy in all that concerned the Eastern Question, the change in Turkey, and the "other more important questions of the day." In any case a situation arose like that of 1914: Servia almost at war with Austria, and supported by Russia. The Press got excited. It was said that during and after the Bosnian crisis the British Press and Parliament abounded more than before in expressions of hatred for the German Empire and people, and especially for the German Emperor (*Reventlow*, 376); also that Count Arenthal, though silent as to the date of the execution of his scheme, had imparted his intention of annexation to the German and Italian Ambassadors, nor met with any opposition from them (*ib.* 358); in which case Germany must have been prepared for it. But not a word of the plan had been told to King Edward during his August visit to Austria.

The King therefore had a legitimate grievance, and Lord Redesdale tells with what annoyance he received the news. "It was on the 8th of October that the King received the news at Balmoral, and no one who was there can forget how terribly he was upset. Never did I see him so moved" (*Memories*, i. 178). Lord Morley, who was also at Balmoral at the time, makes no mention of this effect on the King. But he refers to these Balkan troubles as involving "such a quantity of intrigue, secrecy, and downright lying, that we don't know whether we stand on firm ground or on treacherous bog," and quotes the episode as showing "the intense interest of the King in foreign policy," and his "intimate first-hand knowledge both of the players and

the cards in the Balkan game" (*Recollections*, ii. 277). But how little that knowledge was worth is proved by the event. Less than two months before the King and Sir Charles Hardinge had been engaged with such players as the Austrian Emperor and Count Arenthal, and they had discussed the Eastern Question, "especially the Balkan difficulties," "with the utmost apparent intimacy." No wonder, therefore, that the King felt "treacherously deceived." But it required no genius to see that any tampering with the Treaty of Berlin on the part of one Power without the consent of all the signatories endangered the world's peace: so that Lord Redesdale's remark, that the King's forecast of the danger "showed him to be possessed of that prevision which marks the statesman" (i. 179), seems needlessly eulogistic. Thousands besides the King had the same prevision without claiming to be statesmen at all.

Into this seething cauldron of intrigue and counter-intrigue to which the policy of *ententes* and alliances had reduced the Concert of Europe a fresh explosive was thrown on October 27th by the publication in the *Daily Telegraph*, through the error of an official, of the celebrated interview with the Kaiser, who conceived that the open expression of his feelings might conduce to a better understanding between his country and our own. The result proved disappointing in both countries. The statement, or the fact, that in the Boer War the Kaiser had refused to join with France and Russia in a demand on England to terminate the war, or that he had sent to Windsor a plan of campaign for its speedier ending, was not calculated to reconcile English feeling towards him, which simply reflected the well-known feeling of the Court. And the vexation caused in Germany by the publication was so great that Prince Bülow tendered his resignation, though persuaded by the Kaiser to withdraw it. But had it not been that the confession stimulated the ever-growing cry in England for a larger Navy and for universal military service, it may be doubted whether the indignation would have been so loudly

pronounced. The Kaiser is reported to have expressed himself as follows: "You English are mad, mad, mad as March hares. What has come over you that you are so completely given over to suspicions quite unworthy of a great nation? What more can I do than I have done? I declared with all the emphasis at my command in my speech at the Guildhall that my heart is set upon peace, and that it is one of my dearest wishes to live on the best terms with England. Have I ever been false to my word? Falsehood and prevarication are alien to my nature. My actions ought to speak for themselves, but you listen not to them, only to those who misinterpret and distort them. That is a personal insult which I feel and resent. To be for ever misjudged, to have my repeated offers of friendship weighed and scrutinized with jealous mistrustful eyes, taxes my patience severely. I have said time after time that I am a friend of England, and your Press, or at least a considerable section of it, bids the people of England refuse my proffered hand, and insinuates that the other holds a dagger. How can I convince a nation against its will? I repeat that I am the friend of England, but you make things difficult for me. My task is not of the easiest. The prevailing sentiment among large sections of the middle and lower classes of my own people is not friendly to England. I am therefore, so to speak, in a minority in my own land, but it is a minority of the best elements, just as it is in England with respect to Germany. That is another reason why I resent your refusal to accept my pledged word that I am the friend of England. I strive without ceasing to improve relations, and you retort that I am your arch-enemy. You make it very hard for me."

The events of later years supply no reason for doubting that the Kaiser spoke with all sincerity and with strict adherence to facts. But the incident caused great indignation in Germany, where many questions were asked in the Reichstag, dealing with the right of the Emperor to interfere with foreign affairs, the reform of the Foreign Office,

the law of ministerial responsibility, and the right of the Reichstag to a voice in the appointment of Ministers. On November 10, 1908, the Chancellor, not permitted to resign, had again to defend the Kaiser's words, but this he did with reservations. He denied that a majority of the German people were unfriendly to England ; there had been regrettable misunderstandings, but he was sure that the whole House would agree with him that the German people wished for peaceable and friendly relations with England on the basis of mutual esteem : a remark loudly applauded from all sides. The Kaiser had also been wrong in indicating possible trouble with Japan in the Pacific as one reason for Germany's shipbuilding. Germany had no thought in the Far East but of acquiring and keeping a share in the trade of Asia ; she contemplated no maritime adventures ; meditated no more aggression in the Pacific than in Europe, and was inspired by no hostility to Japan. As for the Kaiser, for two decades he had striven, often in very difficult circumstances, to bring about friendly relations between England and Germany, and in the face of obstacles which would have discouraged many. The passionate partisanship of Germany for the Boers was humanly intelligible, as arising from sympathy with the weaker side, but it had led to unjust and exaggerated attacks upon England. And so, too, had unjust things been said about Germany in England. Germany's intentions had been misrepresented, and hostile designs against England imputed to her of which she had never thought. The Kaiser, rightly convinced that this state of things was a misfortune for both countries and a danger for the civilized world, had stuck to his aim. Having worked zealously and honestly for a good relationship with England, he was mortified at being the constant object of attacks suspecting his designs, even to the extent of imputing to him secret designs against England's vital interests. So it was that in private talks with English friends he had referred to his conduct towards England in difficult times as proof that he was misjudged in England. But for the future he would be more reserved in his talk ;

otherwise neither the Chancellor nor his successor could bear the responsibility of the office (*Reden*, iii. 134–9).

The most difficult resolution of his whole political life, said the Chancellor, was his compliance with the Kaiser's wish that he should remain in office, for the country's sake as well as the Kaiser's. It behoved the German people to go on quietly guarding their own interests without showing pusillanimity to foreign countries; the misfortune was not greater than prudence could overcome. No one would forget the lesson of the last few days, but there was no reason to manifest embarrassment, and so to make enemies hope that the Empire was internally and externally damaged (*ib.* iii. 140).

It was unfortunately true that a large section of the British Press persisted in representing Germany as the one and sole enemy of England. Some country had to be so represented if the British public was to submit with patience to the heavy burden of a much magnified Navy; and Germany, with her new fleet in building, afforded the obvious target. The question arises, whether more might not have been done than was done to control the Press, if peace was sincerely desired. King Edward was an intimate friend of the editor of the *Morning Post*, Mr. Algernon Borthwick, later Lord Glenesk; of Mr. Edward Lawson, later Lord Burnham, of the *Daily Telegraph*; and of Mr. W. H. Russell (Legge, *King Edward in His True Colours*, 228). What line did these princes of the Press take in regard to the German scare? Did they contribute in the smallest degree to the lessening of exaggerated alarms, or to the promotion of friendlier feelings? Is not the answer notoriously in the negative? Yet might not the manufacturers of public opinion been influenced more on the side of peace, if peace was sincerely desired? Could the King do nothing to induce the Press to play what tune he pleased? Yet the Press during the whole of his reign was remarkable for nothing so much as for the unfaltering Jingoism of its tone. Professor Schiemann, who let nothing in the British Press escape him, referred to the article in

the *National Review* for November by its editor, Mr. L. J. Maxse, as surpassing in enmity and unveracity anything that had been put on the market for the last ten years; and that, as he said, was saying much (viii. 340). But Germany's most malevolent enemies in the Press, he said, were Mr. C. A. Pearson and Lord Northcliffe, who had made the cultivation of hostility to Germany their speciality; nor could this easily be denied.

But if modern diplomacy did not show itself in the purest possible light over the Bosnian episode, it is to its credit that it averted a general conflagration. The Declaration of the annexation also announced the cession to Turkey of the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar, indicating that Austria was not in pursuit of territorial acquisition. And Isvolsky, who personified Russia, succeeded in preventing an Austro-Servian war by satisfying Servia with Russian sympathy and moral support, and by trying to get Austria to submit all the questions affecting the Berlin treaty to a Conference between the signatory Powers. Sir E. Grey, at Scarborough on November 20th, made a speech which had a calming effect in Germany: he expressed his belief that no nation in Europe entertained evil designs against England, and this was taken as a refutation of the slanders that had been rife against Germany for many years (*Schiemann*, viii. 363).

The German Chancellor also made two speeches in which he endeavoured to pacify international opinion, and indulged in some very frank criticisms of the Empire he conducted. It inspired abroad, he admitted, more respect, and even fear, than it did affection, and this from elementary causes. Even Bismarck had been unable to extinguish France's policy of revenge; nor was it unnatural that the commercial development of Germany should have changed the once friendlier feelings of the English people, or rather of a part of them, into mistrust, and even a certain anxiety. But such antagonisms were not insuperable. Time would heal or lessen many of them. He saw no danger of war near at hand: what Germany needed was cool blood, fearlessness, and firmness; quiet at home and abroad (*Reden*, iii.

144). On December 7, 1908, he made one of his admirable speeches on foreign affairs. It was not true that Germany had known long beforehand of Austria's intention to turn her occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina into an annexation; she was informed of it about the same time as Italy and Russia. From the start Germany decided to further Austrian interests to the best of her power, and Isvolsky, the Russian Foreign Minister, was told at once that Germany would stand by Austria in the proposed Conference. He was convinced that Russian policy bore no hostility to Germany, and that their old relations continued. And Isvolsky, on his side, had reassured him that there were no public or secret agreements between England and Russia against Germany. Italy had shown much irritation at Austria's policy in the Balkans, but he hoped that reconciliation would soon be effected; it was Italy's interest to be in alliance, not only with Germany, but also with Austria. Morocco was again causing trouble, but with goodwill on the part of all concerned an understanding on all points might be hoped for. The treaty between Japan and the United States of November 27, 1908, need cause no anxiety: it conformed to Germany's principle of an open door for trade, of the territorial *status quo*, and of the integrity and independence of China. He concluded by associating himself with Mr. Asquith's words at the Guildhall on November 9th, when he had said: "I cannot forget the express declaration of the Kaiser that the leading aim of his policy is the maintenance of peace in Europe and of good relations between Great Britain and Germany. In this spirit we wish to act with other Powers, with Germany certainly not less than with others."

Isvolsky's Circular Note to the Powers on December 23rd also denoted a conciliatory attitude; and his speech to the Duma on December 24th, whilst affirming the fullest harmony with France, declared that Russian policy was in no sense directed against Germany, and that "no open nor secret agreements directed against German interests existed between Russia and England." He also pointed to

the understanding lately effected with Italy, and affirmed that since the crisis had begun Russia had acted in full accord not only with France, her ally, but also with Italy. Which meant the beginning of the defection of Italy from the Triple Alliance: a defection for which British diplomacy had long worked. Affirmations of the continuance and solidity of the alliance had followed the meeting of the Kaiser and the King of Italy at Venice on March 25th; the meeting of Prince Bülow and Baron Arenthal at Vienna on March 29th, and of Prince Bülow with Signor Tittoni at Rome on April 12th; but Italian and Austrian ambitions were setting in different directions; it was noticed as a bad sign that the Emperor of Austria had not returned at Rome the visit paid to him at Vienna by the King of Italy; and Signor Fortis, an ex-Prime Minister, was congratulated in the Italian Senate on December 21st for having ventured to say that the only enemy which Italy had to fear was her good ally Austria-Hungary.

But, however sweetly statesmen might speak, it was on a note of growing international discord and of great internal unrest in every country under the sun that the year 1908 drew to its agitated close. Professor Schiemann on the last day of the year attested "a feeling of uneasiness" as pervading the world; the pacific speeches of statesmen made no difference, and he traced it all to the one fact of the persistence of England in her policy of encircling Germany (viii. 401). Thus the year ended not unfitly with one of the most destructive natural convulsions which come sometimes to remind us that the very earth on which we struggle and quarrel is held by us on a most precarious tenure. In the earthquake that on December 28th destroyed Messina and Reggio, and devastated an immense area in Southern Calabria, it was computed that 200,000 people lost their lives. It seemed as if the moral and political disturbance of the human world was reflected in its physical structure.

CHAPTER IX

1909
THE KING'S VISIT TO BERLIN

The King had rightly gauged the danger of war from the high-handed action of Austria in annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina; for the war-cloud hung heavily over Europe all the winter. But the suspicion that Germany had been behind Austria seems to have had no more foundation than many similar suspicions. Prince Bülow declared that Austria's Circular Note on the annexation had only been handed in on October 7, 1908, at about the same time that it reached Italy and Russia, though Germany had assured Austria the previous day of her loyalty to the alliance. On October 7th Germany informed the British Government not only of her sympathy with the Young Turkish Revolution, but also of her intention not to leave Austria in the lurch (*Reden*, iii. 184). And the Kaiser's evidence coincides with his Chancellor's. The annexation, he told the Czar, "was a genuine surprise for everybody, but particularly so for us, as we were informed about Austria's intentions even later than you. I think it my duty to call your attention to this, considering that Germany has been accused of having pushed Austria to take this step. This allegation is absurd," etc. (*Letter* 60, January 8th, 1909).

The situation singularly resembled that of July 1914, when the long-threatening war-cloud actually burst. Turkey, Servia, and Montenegro had their several claims to compensation for the territories of which the annexation dispossessed them. When Servia, backed by England and Russia, wished to submit her claims to a Conference of the Powers, Baron Arenthal, the Austrian Foreign Minister,

raised the objection that such a Conference would be too like a tribunal before which Austria would have to appear in the light of a defendant: the same difficulty which recurred in 1914. The Kaiser was annoyed that this proposal of a Conference had been published in the French papers before being communicated to Germany; he complained to the Czar of the "tendency of Russian papers to lean on England and France"; French, English, and Russian papers had raised "a jubilant shout about this achievement of the new Triple Entente," and Germany could not urge her ally "to consent to a programme which we knew she would not accept, quite apart from the consideration that the programme had been drawn up without us; our co-operation having been dispensed with in a manner that was judged by the outer world as an intended demonstration. . . . Had Russia consulted us in the right time, matters would not be in the awful muddle that they are in now, nor in such a critical state." But the Kaiser hoped with all his heart that a peaceful solution would be found, and anything that he could do personally to that end would certainly be done.

So wrote the Kaiser to the Czar on January 8, 1909, showing the peril of the time and the Kaiser's personal desire for peace. All the evidence shows that, however injudicious his speeches often were, the Emperor strove for peace. As Count Czernin says of him: "Both preceding and during the war" he "never played the part attributed to him by the Entente." Nevertheless the critical state of things caused by the Bosnian episode gave great impetus to the war spirit everywhere. At home never had the scare of an invasion reached so great a height, nor the increase of the German Navy been represented in colours so alarming. Australia and New Zealand undertook to pay for two armed cruisers for their threatened mother-country. The theatre, too, was called into the service of the panic. At Wyndham's Theatre on and after January 28th the play called "The Englishman's Home" utilized the cry of our insecurity against invasion for the propagation of universal

military service, and all through the spring months our prospective naval strength as compared with Germany's was hotly debated in Parliament and in the Press. And at the head of the naval scare chorus were heard the wild alarm-notes of Mr. Balfour, the leader of the Unionist Opposition.

But a more pacific atmosphere was produced by the visit of the King and Queen to Berlin from February 9th to February 12th. Lord Crewe, as a Cabinet Minister, accompanied the King on this visit, in compliance with a widely expressed wish, but not without the unfailing Sir Charles Hardinge; and whilst Lord Crewe was free to talk on African matters, he was not free to speak about armaments, unless the Germans started that topic; to Sir Charles was left more important matters, such as the Balkan question, the Bagdad railway, etc. Sir Charles thought the public hope of good results from the visit exaggerated; the Foreign Office thought that there could be no improvement in Anglo-German relations whilst the question of German naval preparations lasted: the same opinion he had expressed at Reval (*Siebert*, 722). Sir Charles spoke with satisfaction of his talks with the Chancellor and with Baron Schoen, but as the German Ministers did not raise the question of naval armaments nor of the Bagdad railway, nothing was said on these topics from the English side, and the talk only resulted in pacific assurances from the Chancellor. The King, suffering from a cold and from fatigue, was very silent, leaving all political discussions to Sir Charles, and himself only speaking to Prince Bülow for a few minutes after the lunch at the British Embassy. With his nephew he had no political talk. Only on the platform of the Berlin station, just before departing, did the King tell the Kaiser that he thought the excitement in English public opinion and in the Press about the increase of the German Navy laughable—the Kaiser must carry out the naval programme of the Reichstag (*ib.* 726). The main result of it all was that our Government became convinced that Germany's efforts were for the maintenance of

peace, and acted as a moderating influence upon Austria (*ib.* 719, 723, 725). And Sir E. Grey thought that it would lessen her fears of isolation (*ib.* 728).

The Berlin visit thus contributed to a pacification, though it left essential differences unaltered. Baron Greindl remarked that the coincidence of the visit with our greatly increased Naval Budget, with our formidable squadron in the North Sea, and with the creation of our Territorial Army, not needed for defence, deducted from any real improvement in our relations with Germany. What did England intend to do with such an Army, unless she entertained designs of aggression on the Continent? was the question asked. But Chancellor Bülow put the best face he could on the episode. It was not so much, he said on March 29th, the hearty reception given to their guests by the German Court, nor the sympathetic participation in it by all classes in Germany, as the words of real love for peace and friendship spoken by the King and since confirmed in England in the Speech from the Throne, and in the debate on the Address, which had made both countries again conscious of their very many grounds for mutual esteem and for pacific rivalry in the works of peace (*Reden*, iii. 179). Germany, he said, was England's best customer, and though there were in England, as in Germany, fanatics who had no eyes for these moments of unification nor for the community of interests which united the two nations, he had the firm hope that such men would never succeed in exercising a decisive influence on the political thought of the British people (*ib.* iii. 180). But in this hope he underestimated the power of the war-fanatics in both countries. In any case, at a later date he looked back on the Berlin visit, coming after the acute stage of the Bosnian crisis, as having had a distinctly pacifying effect, and as having marked the close of the King's policy of encircling Germany; he thought that it cast the light of a new hope on the future relations between his country and ours (*Deutsche Politik*, 60–3).

It also added not a little to the chances of peace that

the Berlin visit coincided on February 9th with an agreement between Germany and France about Morocco, which put a temporary end to their friction about it. It was described by Prince Bülow as giving France, in recognition of her special interest in the country, a political interest to which she was justly entitled, without conferring on her any right of property; whilst it gave to Germany a share in its trade, and thus, in place of mutual conflict, united both countries in the common task of opening up Morocco for their joint benefit (*Reden*, iii. 181–2). By this happy agreement Germany was thus brought into harmony with France, and incidentally with England, to the perceptible lightening of the political sky.

One consequence of this was that, when in the course of his Continental tour, which lasted from March 8th to May 8th, King Edward met King Alfonso of Spain at San Sebastian and at Biarritz on March 31st, and the King of Italy at Baiae on April 29th, the jealousy aroused by the Gaeta visit two years before found no appreciable expression, and the political weather-glass kept steadily to "fair." But about the Baiae meeting something more needs to be said than that it was merely a reaffirmation of Anglo-Italian harmony (*Ann. Reg.*, 1909, 293). The Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Rome, on June 22nd, thus reported what happened: The meeting had been arranged on the understanding that there were to be no political discussions; nevertheless King Edward at two separate meetings with the King of Italy and with Tittoni, the Foreign Minister, raised the question of the balance of power in the Adriatic and of Italy's attitude in a contingent Anglo-German war. Neither the Italian King nor his Minister vouchsafed any answer to this question, but both were greatly surprised by this reference to an Anglo-German war as no longer an academical possibility but as an immediate probability. And, considering the recent visit to Berlin and the Franco-German agreement about Morocco, the story, which rests on the authority of Sir Rennell Rodd, our Ambassador at Rome, shows how deeply the idea of a

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war with Germany possessed the mind and governed the diplomacy of King Edward (*Siebert*, 449–50). To detach Italy and, if possible, Austria from their alliance with Germany was the King's leading idea throughout his reign, and in the case of Italy the policy eventually succeeded triumphantly.

Bosnia still remained a critical problem. Fortunately Baron Aienthal succeeded on February 26th in settling Turkey's claim to financial compensation, and on April 6th in getting the consent of the Powers to such a change in Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin as consisted in freeing the harbour of Antivari from Austrian control and in removing the exclusion of warships from all Montenegrin waters. But Servia gave greater difficulty. The Kaiser was confident that there would be no Austro-German war, because such a thing would not be at all like the Emperor Francis Joseph, who was "wise and judicious and such a venerable gentleman"; nor did he think that Arenthal harboured any such design. But at the end of February war seemed almost certain; Austria's military preparations were costing her £40,000 a day; she had two armies prepared to operate on the Servian frontier, and a third on the Montenegrin. The arming of Servia, said Prince Bülow on March 29th, was a dangerous game; he thought it intolerable that the peace of Europe should be endangered for the sake of Servia; Servian aspirations were not worth a war, far less a world-conflagration. Europe's need of peace would prevent such a calamity; he was encouraged in this hope by the policy of Russia, and thought that all lovers of peace owed a debt of gratitude to Russia's leading statesmen and especially to the Czar (*Reden*, iii. 189).

This needed saying; for Russia had been growing very restive, and diplomacy was drifting to its ordinary conclusion when, towards the end of March, Germany, despite her traditional indifference to the Balkans, suddenly intervened with an intimation to St. Petersburg that, in the event of Russia's assisting Servia in a possible war with Austria, Germany would be bound by her alliance to stand by

Austria, and that, if peace were to be maintained, Russia must recognize the Austrian annexation. Russia then yielded and ceased to support Servia, so that Servia had to climb down, and to recognize the Bosnian annexation as not encroaching on her rights; she agreed to withdraw her protests, to place her Army on a peace footing, and to try to live on good terms with her neighbour. It was in reference to this incident that the Kaiser, on September 21st of the following year, at the Vienna Town Hall, gained great popularity with the German citizens of the Austrian capital, where a part of the "Ring" was to be called after him, by his allusion to having taken his stand "in shining armour" by the side of his Austrian ally, a phrase which sufficiently indicated the real meaning of the avoidance of war (*Ann. Reg.*, 1910, 313–14; *Margutti*, 228).

The result was an undoubted success for German diplomacy. "It was Germany alone," wrote Baron Greindl on April 1st, "that imposed peace. The new constellation of the Powers, organized by the King of England, has measured its strength against the Central European Union, and has proved itself incapable of loosening that Union. Hence the "ill-humour shown" by *The Times* and other organs. The Baron commented on the disappointment felt in London on perceiving that the machine constructed by the King with a view to coercing Germany had failed to work when it was to have been made use of in the Austro-Servian conflict; "that is to say, at the very first trial." Experience had shown to Russia the inefficiency of the coalition formed by the late King of England, he wrote on November 7, 1910, the first time that the said coalition was put to the test. Nor was the view taken in England very different; Blunt, for instance, speaking of the result as "a great slap in the face to our Foreign Office, and the King and Hardinge and Grey, who had played his cards badly" (*Diaries*, ii. 251, April 2, 1909), but naturally it was not in diplomatic human nature that such a "slap in the face" should ever be forgotten or forgiven.

Earlier in the year, on the Kaiser's birthday (January 27th), the statement of Count Pourtalès, German Ambassador at St. Petersburg, may have been true, that the story of Germany's having in any way threatened Russia was a false legend, and that history would prove that the crisis had been settled by a friendly exchange of opinion between the two countries (*Schiemann*, x. 41, February 2, 1910). But diplomacy has long learnt how to convey a threat without expressing it in bald words. And the Kaiser acted wisely in attributing most of the credit of the peace to the Czar. "I want," he wrote to him on April 3rd, "to once more thank you sincerely for the loyal and noble way in which you kindly led the way to help to preserve peace. It is thanks to your high-minded and unselfish initiative that Europe has been spared the horrors of a universal war, and that the Holy Week will remain unsullied by human blood, which would have been spilt. You may celebrate your Easter with the elating knowledge that everywhere in Europe thousands of families are on their knees thanking the Lord for peace and praying for his blessing on your head." Again he wrote on May 2nd to the Czar, in reference to the settlement of Turkey's claims on Bulgaria: "A few weeks ago, when affairs threatened to become dangerous, your wise and courageous decision secured peace for all the nations. I was most gratified that through my helping co-operation you were able to fulfil your task." But a more prosaic interpretation of the Czar's efforts for peace was that Russia's military preparations for war were still incomplete; it had been understood at Reval that Russia would be in no position to help her friends in a German war before 1914 or 1916.

The Kaiser was rightly convinced that in an agreement between himself and the Czar lay the world's best hope for peace. "If you and I," he wrote, "join in open and loyal co-operation for the maintenance of Peace, which is my most fervent wish, I am thoroughly convinced that Peace will not only be maintained but not even be troubled. There is not a shadow of doubt that Peace guarantees the

vital interests, the security of welfare of our peoples as well as of our dynasties." There was in those days no stronger pacifist in Europe than Wilhelm II, who paid such honour to peace as usually to spell it with a capital P. Yet the legend of history is that his heart was set all the time on the war that ultimately ensued. Thus the diplomatic rebuff to Russia had no appreciable effect on the good relations between the cousins of Germany and Russia. But the crisis, by increasing hostility between Russia and Austria, and between their respective Ministers, Isvolsky and Arenthal, naturally made relations more delicate between Russia and Germany, and to improve these, and to keep Italy loyal to her alliance, was the main political motive of the Kaiser's travels that spring. News of the fresh revolution at Constantinople reached him on his way to Corfu, and drew from him the just remark that the East was " a regular nightmare." He had hoped to meet King Edward at Malta or Athens, but the King's engagements to meet the King of Italy at Baiae did not permit of it, and instead he and the Kaiserin, after leaving their magnificent palace at Corfu, were entertained at Malta by the Duke of Connaught (May 10th). Two days later they were met at Brindisi by the King and Queen of Italy, after which they were welcomed at Vienna by the Austrian Emperor with a State ceremonial. Could reliance be placed on her Austrian and Italian allies, Germany might hope to hold her own against her enemies in Europe ; but above all was it desirable to keep Russia from joining them. Hence the meeting between the Kaiser and the Czar at Bjorkoe off Finland on June 17th, when there were the usual toasts of friendship on board the *Standard*, to the great dissatisfaction of France and ourselves, to whom any civilities from Nicholas II to the Kaiser argued disloyalty to the Triple Entente. But the Czar, who always liked to have a foot in each camp, soon made amends by favouring both France and England with his presence. On July 31st he was received in his yacht by the French President at Cherbourg, but without any of that wild enthusiasm which had

greeted him a few years before, when as yet it was hoped that Russia would prove a tower of strength in that war with Germany which was some day to recover Alsace-Lorraine for France. On August 2nd the Czar left Cherbourg for the Solent, where he witnessed our great naval review, and was met by some of the largest of our cruisers. Protests against his reception by certain Liberal and Labour members, and by two of our Bishops, were of no avail. The Czar was duly impressed by the sight, and on August 3rd Sir John Fisher told Lord Esher that the King had been "enormously gratified at the magnificent show of the Fleet to put before the Emperor of Russia," and Lord Redesdale testifies to the "happy memory of a truly royal geniality and kindness," which Nicholas II left behind him (*Memories*, ii. 767). But the Czar was prompt to remove any impression of partiality by going straight from Cowes to the Kiel Canal, where he again met his friend and cousin, the Kaiser.

The narrow escape from a great war was to the credit of the monarchs and diplomatists of Europe; nor would Prince Bülow listen for a moment to the Socialist Ledebour's claim that peace was due to the Socialists, and especially to the revolutionary Socialists of Russia and Servia. He defended the Czar and his Government against all attacks. The idea that the world's peace ran any danger in these days from the ambitions of Sovereigns or the quarrels of Ministers did not tally with the facts of the time, for most of the conflicts of the last few decades had arisen from no such causes, but rather from the passions of public opinion working on the Executive through Parliaments and the Press. Contemporary monarchs were all peace-loving, as were their Governments, and the last few weeks had proved the same of the diplomatists (*ib.* iii. 197).

In the same speech of March 29th Prince Bülow touched with his usual tact on Anglo-German relations. There had been conversations about an Anglo-German agreement to limit the cost and the size of their respective navies, but as there had been no English proposal to serve as a basis of discussion, the matter had fallen through. But the

German Government would do all in its power to promote such friendly relations between the two countries as would leave no room for suspicion. As to the recent Anglo-Russian agreement about Persia, it did not affect German interests, which were purely commercial, not political; it rather promoted German interests, as it safeguarded the independence and integrity of Persia, and kept the "open door" for trade (*ib.* iii. 191–3). The English complaint that Germany had refused English proposals for a reduction of naval armaments was in conflict with the German contention that no proposals of a practical nature had ever been made to her (*Reventlow*, 378).

But unfortunately neither the pacification of the Near East nor the calming influence of King Edward's visit to Berlin had more than a superficial effect on the agitation of Europe. In England the Liberal Imperialists and the militarists carried all before them, and the events of the year intensified the enmity between Germany and England which their naval rivalry naturally produced. No man at the time was more sensible of the future possible danger from Germany than Sir John Fisher, who wrote that "the only thing in the world that England had to fear was Germany, and none else"; but he understood the hollowness of the naval agitation. On March 21, 1909, he wrote to Lord Esher that, after four years' building, our Navy had "*now* culminated in *two* complete fleets in home waters, *each of which* is incomparably superior to the whole German Fleet mobilized for war. . . . This can't alter for years, even if we were supinely passive in our building" (*Memories*, 189). And on the same date he wrote: "The Germans are not building in this feverish haste to fight you! *No!* it's the daily dread of a second Copenhagen which they know a Pitt or a Bismarck would execute on them! Cease building, or I strike!" (*ib.* 190). From the point of view, therefore, of those who really knew the facts about the respective navies the whole panic appeared in the light of an organized intrigue. And two years later, on September 20, 1911, Lord Fisher expressed himself to Lord Esher as

knowing for a certainty that "the Germans were in a blue funk of the British Navy and were quite assured that 942 German merchant steamers would be gobbled up in the first forty-eight hours of war, and that they were also in fear of our landing 100,000 troops; there was a lovely spot" he knew of only 90 miles from Berlin; 14 miles of sandy beach in Pomerania (*ib.* 203). And as the Kaiser also knew of this "lovely spot," and all his Generals and Admirals too, the German fear of an English invasion was probably greater than our own fear of an invasion from them in these years that led up to the war.

Rumour is the ready instrument of the war-makers. Just as in 1793 the war-feeling was assisted by stories of French attempts to poison the New River water with arsenic, or of a sergeant in a brown coat who drilled numbers of men in a dark room preparatory to issuing forth and destroying the British Constitution, so now some rifles bought by the Society of Miniature Rifle Clubs for conversion into "miniature" practice rifles and stored in a cellar opposite the Law Courts became converted by rumour into 50,000 stands of Mauser rifles, with 160 rounds of ball cartridge for each stored in a cellar near Charing Cross, and ready for the 66,000 German soldiers already in England; and hot-air balloons sent aloft for advertising motor-cars became airships of undoubted German origin and hostile design. Nor was the hysterical frame of mind thus produced much relieved by the entertainment at the Waldorf Hotel on May 1st of some German Labour leaders by the International Arbitration League, when Mr. John Burns talked too soon of the collapse of the attempt to foment an Anglo-German war, and predicted that there would never be a war that would involve Great Britain, Germany, France, and Russia. British Labour leaders paid a return visit to Germany (May 28th to June 10th), and British ministers of religion went there also in June as angels of peace, and the German Burgomasters and municipal councillors, who visited England in the last week of May, were received by the King at

Buckingham Palace on May 24th, entertained at the Guildhall and the Mansion House, and made or listened to speeches that favoured friendship between England and Germany.

Well-intentioned as were such efforts for peace, what could they avail against a Press that seemed for the most part bent on war and could play what tune it pleased on the public mind? "The fact must be taken note of," wrote the Kaiser to the Czar on June 8, 1909, "that the papers mostly create public opinion. Some of them err through their ignorance and lack of correct information; they scarcely see farther than their own noses' length. But more dangerous and at the same time more loathsome is that part of the Press which writes what it is paid for. The scoundrels who do such dirty work are in no fear of starving. They will always continue to incite the hostility of one nation against the other, and when at last through their hellish devices they have brought about the much-desired collision, they placidly sit down and watch the fight which they organized, well assured that the profit will be theirs, no matter what the issue may be. In this way in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred what is vulgarly called 'public opinion' is a mere forgery."

In saying this the Kaiser was thinking not so much of a possible collision between Germany and England as of a possible one between Germany and Russia. The Bosnian question having been settled without war, he was surprised that, instead of earning gratitude, he and the Czar had "reaped nothing but blame"; "especially the Press in general has behaved in the basest way against me." "Some papers had even credited him with having been the author of the Austrian annexation: an incident which, he declared, so far from having been taken under German instigation, had occurred to Germany's surprise and without her knowledge (January 8, 1909). "Personally," he wrote, "I am totally indifferent to newspaper gossip, but I cannot refrain from a certain feeling of anxiety that, if not contradicted at once, the foul and filthy lies which are

freely circulated about my policy and my country will tend to create bitterness between our two peoples by virtue of their constant uncontradicted repetition." Was the Kaiser's language too strong? "What sells a newspaper? . . ." wrote Mr. Kennedy Jones, who, as one of the founders and directors of the *Daily Mail*, ought to know. "The first answer is, War; war not only creates a supply of news, but a demand for it. . . . A paper has only to be able to put on its placard 'A Great Battle' for its sales to mount up" (*Fleet Street and Downing Street*, 198). The Kaiser recognized a danger of universal application to the world's peace, and perceived the working forces which were sedulously being employed to produce such an estrangement between Russia and Germany as would draw Russia definitely and resistlessly into the current of that pro-French policy which King Edward with the best intentions had done so much to advance. "The peace of the world," wrote Baron Greindl on February 13th, "has never been more seriously jeopardized than since the King of England busied himself with trying to consolidate it."

Another episode which tended to counteract the good effect of the interchange of Anglo-German courtesies was the Imperial Conference of the newspaper editors of the British Empire which occupied the greater part of June. This Conference gave the Liberal Imperialists the most splendid opportunity for fomenting the naval alarm. First Lord Rosebery presided, and complained of the insufficiency of our preparations to meet the silent warfare of naval armaments. Were we reverting to barbarism or would the working-men of the world arise and stop the competition? Sir E. Grey, on June 7th, endorsed "every word Lord Rosebery had said" about armaments. Balfour agreed with both Rosebery and Grey, and Haldane with all three of them. Lord Roberts, of course, raised a note of alarm in the interests of universal military training. Lord Morley raised the question whether the influence of the Press was directed to the promotion of peace, and Mr. Churchill advised it to refrain from causing international

friction, and to proclaim the solidarity of Christendom and the interdependence of nations. But it was reserved to Lord Milner to make the worst forecast of the future. He thought the idea of "the rebarbarization of Europe," if it meant a greater tendency to settle disputes by war, "dreadful nonsense," such tendency being less than ever before, because the national armies of Europe made for the maintenance of peace!

All this speechifying added fuel to the fire. The Colonial delegates were made to realize the danger of the Empire to which they belonged and their duty of defending it, though possibly the naval review of the Home and Atlantic Fleets of 144 warships at Spithead on June 12th may have helped to lessen their anxiety. In any case they were much impressed by the evidence of the motherland's readiness for war as attested by the naval and military displays they witnessed, and one Australian editor went so far as to declare his inability to understand the pessimism entertained by Englishmen about their own country. The newspapers had led them to expect to see nothing but decadence and unpreparedness for war, nor could they understand that this was all part of the Jingo game (*Ann. Reg.*, 1909, 150). Great displeasure was caused by Sir John Fisher's speech at the Guildhall on November 9th, when he affirmed the instant readiness of our fleet for war, and bade the public sleep quiet in their beds. He warned it against being frightened by bogeys of invasion such as were periodically raised by all sorts of leagues, and reduced the story of 100,000 German soldiers practising embarkation in the German Fleet—a number that would require hundreds and thousands of tons for transport—to the dimensions of one solitary regiment that had been embarked for some trifling manœuvres. And if this was the opinion of the best naval authority in the kingdom, some other cause for the naval alarm of these years must be sought for than any real fear for the safety of the country.

Meantime events in Germany were moving badly for the Chancellor, who between the Socialists and the Centre

Party found himself in a position that was fast becoming untenable. In a speech on January 19th he championed the cause of the Kaiser against the Socialists, who threatened the monarchy with destruction, nor hesitated to criticize the monarch. He boasted that during his twelve years of office he had done his utmost to protect the Crown from misapprehension, and to prevent a split between the Crown and the country. All men knew, he said, that the King and Kaiser was a ruler whose mind was filled with great ideals and inspired with the wish to lead Germany forward; who had promoted trade and industry and science as few before him; who had not neglected the needs of agriculture; who had created the Fleet, perfected the Army, and maintained peace (*Reden*, iii. 175–6). And on March 29th he made two statements about the Kaiser which were of some historical interest. He repeated that it was on his own advice and responsibility that the Kaiser had gone to Tangier on March 31, 1905; and he said that the famous telegram of the Kaiser to President Kruger was not despatched on the Kaiser's own initiative, but at the advice of his responsible Ministers; it was an act of State, not a personal act (*ib.* iii. 194–5). On March 30th the Prince repelled with not unjust indignation the charge of lack of loyalty levelled at him by Gotz von Olenhusen: for twenty-four years his guiding star had been the welfare of the Kaiser and that of his country, which he regarded as inextricably bound together (*ib.* iii. 199). "Attack me as much as you please," he exclaimed to the Socialists, "but do leave the Kaiser out of the debate." He contended that the Kaiser's twenty years of work for the good of his Empire, in the face of much misunderstanding, exaggerated criticism and unjust attacks, entitled him to a liberal judgment; it was time they returned to the old tradition which left the person of the Kaiser out of the region of debate (*ib.* iii. 201–2). In answer to the challenge thrown out to him to dispute the existence of a Camarilla ruling the Court, he not only disputed it, but repulsed the whole gossip about it with the utmost deci-

sion. There was no Camarilla at Court, and, if there were, it would have no influence. But he knew that the longer a man was Chancellor the stronger swelled the chorus of revenge; this was a fate he shared with his great predecessor, Bismarck, whom he considered "the greatest statesman of the last century."

In this embittered state of political feeling in Germany the question of the Empire's finance came as a clear signal of impending danger. Finance, which has wrecked so many empires, was now to wreck the German Government. It was impossible to meet the growing expenses of the Empire without growing sources of income, and whence could such sources flow but from the pockets of the taxpayers? The Government's idea was a direct tax upon inheritance and an indirect tax upon brandy and tobacco. But the first was as strongly opposed by the Right or Conservative side of the Reichstag as the last was by the Left. In dividing the Right from the Left the Centre Party saw a chance of dividing the Coalition Block of Liberals and Conservatives which had supported the Chancellor for so many years. So on June 16th the Chancellor made a gallant speech to save his Government. He declared himself unperturbed by the social ostracism to which the strongest party in the House exposed him; in England people were not so small-minded as to suffer political differences to affect their personal and social relations, and he hoped it might some day be so in Germany, and that a man for mere difference of opinion would not be set down as a rogue or a fool. He hoped that patriotic feelings would prevail over narrow-mindedness and party rancour. For weeks the papers had been discussing whether he should remain in office or not; but this did not depend on the papers nor on his own wishes; it rested on the Kaiser's belief in his ability to serve the State abroad and at home, and on his own opinion on the subject.

But all this was oratory thrown away. When it came to voting on June 24th, 195 votes to 187 declared against the succession duty. A majority of the Conservatives, the

Centre Party, and the Poles had won the day. Prince Bülow took no further part in the Reichstag, though at the Kaiser's request he continued in office till on July 10th Bethmann-Hollweg became his successor as Chancellor. On June 26th he laid his resignation before the Kaiser at Kiel, and on July 14th he received from the Kaiser his final release, accompanied by a very flattering letter of regret and by the Order of the Black Eagle with diamonds. The Kaiser referred to their many years of confidential co-operation in the government of the Empire, and expressed the warmest gratitude for his great services to himself and the country (*ib.* iii. 226–7).

The incident was a misfortune for the prospects of peace; for, earnest for peace though his successor was, Prince Bülow had been a great defender of the peace of the world. It would be hard to find a speech of his that was not of a pacifying and calming character; he had done what was possible to keep in subjection the passionate and inflammatory elements of his own country. His, too, was the rather new doctrine that it behoved a modern diplomatist, not only to try to get a "good Press" in the country to which he was accredited for the country he served, but to create an atmosphere of confidence and sympathy between Court and Court, between Government and Government, between Parliament and Parliament, between Press and Press (*ib.* iii. 310). What a different world might we not inhabit, had such a rule been of traditional observance. Addressing the Peace Congress in the garden of his palace on September 22, 1908, the Prince reminded his hearers how much they could do to make international relations more friendly, and also how much they might do to poison them and turn them to enmity (*ib.* iii. 335). He recognized that in the world as it is wars were no longer due to the caprice of individuals or of Cabinets, but were born of public opinion, which in its turn was the product of the Press, according as that instrument used its powers beneficently or injuriously (*ib.* iii. 295). He rightly ascribed one of the greatest dangers of

the time to the exaggerated importance that newspaper readers were apt to attach to remarks of persons in high position, regardless of the circumstances or the mood in which they were uttered. One of his last public acts in the month of his defeat was the despatch of a telegram to the English clergy then visiting Berlin, in which he said that their efforts for peace would always find in him and the Imperial Government unfailing support; it was their task in common with the clergy of other countries to work for the peace of the nations and to oppose peace-perturbing tendencies, and he hoped that they would return home with the information that on the other side of the North Sea dwelt a peaceable hard-working people which, like its Government, cherished the lively wish to live with its brethren on the other side in peace and in good neighbourly fashion.

It was the custom, unfortunately, in the English Press to reject and ridicule the Chancellor's pacific assurances as the mere outcome of a crafty and ill-intentioned mind. This was the line taken, for instance, by the anonymous writer of two articles in the *Quarterly Review* for July and October 1908, called respectively "The German Peril" and "A Rejoinder to Prince Bülow." Yet it is difficult to see how any statesman desirous of peace can otherwise achieve his aim than by the constant reiteration of pacific and conciliatory counsels. To set against these certain angry or offensive criticisms of this country indulged in long ago by an irritable professor, like the German historian Treitschke, was needlessly to keep alive a spirit of animosity between England and Germany which could only result, as it did ultimately, in a terrible war destined to blight the happiness of the world for untold generations. If every irritable remark of a writer or professor made some twenty years earlier is to be urged as a just cause of war, and to weigh for more than years of conciliatory speaking by the responsible statesmen of a country, then peace becomes a more hopeless cause than ever. Prince Bülow's favourite authors were Goethe and Schopenhauer, the pessimist

philosopher, but he found it possible to combine an optimistic spirit in practice with a pessimistic theory about the world. His optimism he described as nothing else than trust in the good sense of the German people (*ib.* iii. 295). He assigned to a popular lunacy, both in his own country and in ours, the cause of our embittered relations; nor, indeed, is it improbable that epidemics of mental delusion pass, like physical epidemics, over whole populations from time to time under the stimulus of a raging Press propaganda which fans into flame countless slumbering animosities, just as a strong wind drives a fierce fire before it over a grouse moor.

The Chancellor had just passed his sixtieth birthday on May 3, 1909. He had conducted the Foreign Affairs of his country since June 26, 1897, and the Chancellorship since 1901. M. Jules Hurst, of the *Figaro,* was struck by the similarity of his voice with that of King Edward (*ib.* iii. 258). But his resignation made little apparent difference on the course of events. How narrowly he saved Europe from war was not generally understood; during the King's visit to Berlin in February 1909 it was, says Baron Greindl, "recognized on both sides that the greatest efforts were necessary in order to prevent a war from arising out of the Balkan question" (February 17th). The jealousies between the double groups of Alliances still continued with all their potentialities of a sudden surprise. In August the King again spent some weeks at Marienbad, whither, as in the preceding years, M. Clemenceau motored over from Carslbad to lunch with the King on August 15th. The meeting lasted an hour, and from the garden below the animated conversation might be witnessed which the French statesman admitted to have been of a political character. Possibly the obduracy of the old Austrian Emperor came under review. The King's offer before leaving England to visit the Emperor, as in former years, had been this time politely refused, and all that passed between the monarchs was the sending of a birthday present to Francis Joseph on August 18th and the latter's grateful

acknowledgment of the same. On no account would the latter face the King again; and Baron Margutti's surmise is probably correct that "the Emperor was tired of the mental struggle to which the personal intercourse with the King had regularly exposed him; he wished to avoid them." Not even for the bait of Servia would he sever his friendship with Germany.

Some other incidents showed how things were developing. On October 17th, on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument to the French who had fallen at Weissemburg in 1870, a popular demonstration was made in favour of France; and so again at Mulhausen in November, when the German National Anthem was followed, and corrected, by the singing of the Marseillaise.

And in Russia the Neo-Slav movement against Germany and Austria grew more menacing, though the good relations between the Kaiser and the Czar kept in subjection the enmity that divided their subjects. When Nicholas II wished to visit the King of Italy in October, the Kaiser offered him all facilities for his journey through Germany, but it was significant of the continued tension between Russia and Austria that the Czar made a wide circuit to avoid treading on Austrian soil, to the great displeasure of Austria (Siebert's *Aktenstücke*, 451). The Russian and Italian monarchs, attended by their respective Ministers, met at Racconigi: a return visit on the part of the Czar for the King of Italy's visit to Russia in 1902. The meeting was admittedly of political importance, and provoked different emotions in different countries. In England it gave great satisfaction as indicating the inclination of Italy to the side of the Triple Entente (*ib.* 451–2). In Germany it increased mistrust, as another step to her isolation and as an attempt to shatter the Triple Alliance (*ib.* 702–3). Questions affecting Turkey and Italy's special claims to Tripoli were discussed (*ib.* 461), but it was not till 1919 that the secret agreement made at Racconigi was revealed. Russia promised Italy a friendly attitude towards her designs upon Tripoli in return for a similar attitude from

Italy whenever the question might again arise of the passage of Russian warships through the Dardanelles (Morel, *Diplomacy Revealed*, 143 ; *Reventlow*, 389). Thus Italy drew ever farther away from her German ally to the side of the Triple Entente, and if the King's diplomacy had suffered defeat over the Bosnian crisis, his success in detaching Italy from Germany left little to be desired. The most that Germany could hope for from Italy in the " coming war " was a vacillating neutrality.

But in England during the autumn the heated state of domestic politics threw all questions of foreign politics into the shade. The year was marked by some considerable legislative successes. The Act for the Union of the South African Colonies conferred distinction on the Liberal Parliament, and the same may be said of the Trade Board Act, for the diminution of sweated labour ; of the House Planning Act, for the improvement of the housing conditions of the nation ; of the Labour Exchange Act, for facilitating exchanges of employment. No response, indeed, was made to Ireland's desire or demand for Home Rule ; she had to console herself with a measure for the reduction of her noxious weeds, her thistles, docks, and ragwort. But the year derived its chief title to celebrity less from its few successes than from its most signal failure. The Finance Bill, Mr. Lloyd George's Budget, was introduced on April 29th, and its discussion occupied seventy-three days over a period of six months, entailing as many as 554 divisions. A mighty deficit, consequent mainly on the naval expenditure caused by the naval panic, had to be met by a correspondently mighty taxation.

When Liberal Imperialism thus presented its bill, few there were who liked it. Super-tax, too, put in its first appearance ; and new duties, such as " Increment Value Duty," " Reversion Duty," and " Undeveloped Land Duty," turned many a man's hair grey in his effort to understand them. Lord Rosebery called the new Budget " the end of all things," and it was hoped that the House of Lords, greatly daring, would venture for once to reject a Money

Bill, regardless of constitutional precedent. The crisis became so acute that the King's influence as a peacemaker was either sought or offered. First of all Lord Rosebery and Lord Cawdor saw him at Balmoral; then Mr. Asquith on October 5th; finally Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Balfour at Buckingham Palace. But to little purpose so far as pacification went. The House of Lords, on November 30th, following the advice given by Lord Milner at Glasgow on November 26th to "damn the consequences," threw out the Finance Bill by 350 to 75; or, to use the euphemism of the time, they referred the Bill to the people. The challenge was at once taken up by Mr. Asquith on December 2nd, who denounced their action as a "breach of the Constitution and a usurpation of the rights of the Commons." Thus our Constitution of two antagonistic Chambers came to its inevitable clash; only the national will, as expressed by a General Election, could decide the issue between them; and to this ordeal the House of Lords successfully forced the Liberal House of Commons. The Lords had won the first round, but others must inevitably follow, and on this note of bitter internal conflict this troubled year came to its inglorious end.

CHAPTER X

1910

THE END AND RESULTS OF THE REIGN

Chacun, c'est la loi suprême,
Rame, hélas, jusq'a la fin,
Pas d'homme, ô fatal problême !
Qui ne laboure ou ne sème
Sur quelque chose de vain !

VICTOR HUGO: *Soirée en Mer.*

THE House of Lords, having successfully forced a General Election on the country, the first month of the year was wholly given up to the creation of a new Parliament. No single issue could be kept before the electors, and the rejected Finance Bill, the Veto of the Lords, Tariff Reform, and Home Rule competed in fairly equal measure for the favour of the popular voice. That voice consequently failed of clear expression; and the result of all the turmoil was the reduction of the Liberal vote in Parliament from 373 to 274, and the increase of the Unionist vote from 167 to 272, including 43 Liberal Unionists. Mr. Asquith could count on an efficient majority only so long as he could rely on the Irish and Labour vote: a reliance of most precarious value.

Grave Constitutional perplexities, involving the action of the King, confronted the country. Could the King be persuaded to use his veto for the protection of the Lords against any restriction of their power over legislation, or, on the other hand, could he be persuaded to create enough new Peers to override any refusal on their part to bow to the expressed will of the representative Chamber? Only

the future could say, and in the meantime the Constitution was on the rocks.

But it was on our relations with Germany that the election had most effect, and that a most pernicious one. The Unionist cry for a still larger Navy and for conscription depended for success on maintaining and increasing the German alarm, and consequently such alarm became the leading note of the election. It fell to Mr. Balfour, as the Unionist leader, to conduct the chorus of panic, by a speech at Hanley on January 4th.

For himself, he did not believe in war with Germany as inevitable, but the statesmen and diplomatists of the lesser Powers did believe in it, and expected the defeat of Great Britain owing to her insensibility to her responsibilities. Unnamed Germans of position were quoted as asking: "Do you suppose we should ever allow Great Britain to adopt Tariff Reform?" and such a question caused even Mr. Balfour's blood to rise to boiling-point. This speech came in for some ridicule at the hands of Mr. Lloyd George on January 7th, who declared it the last resort of a desperate man, and who justly denounced such "tail-twisting" as a dangerous game for the peace of Europe; whilst Sir Edward Grey said, in answer to it, that the country had never had less reason to talk of war than at that moment. But the alarm was too popular and too well sustained by various interests to be so easily dispelled, and Mr. Robert Blatchford's letters of panic to the *Daily Mail*, republished as a pamphlet called *England and Germany*, found a ready sale in the streets at the price of a penny. In Germany the only redeeming feature of the electoral campaign against her was that all who sailed under the Liberal flag shook themselves free of this nightmare about Germany, but the fact that the French Press took passionately the Unionist side was regarded as a sign of the revival of the anti-German policy of M. Delcassé (*Schiemann*, x. 20–1).

Professor Schiemann complained of men of rank and importance, during the election and before it, advocating

in newspapers and journals the destruction of the German Fleet as the main object of English policy: for the last several years in all parts of the world German undertakings had met with the united disfavour and counteraction of England and France and Russia. To this rule there was scarcely an exception, and it applied equally to Germany's commercial as to her political action (*ib.* x. 141). On the other hand, Germany was very responsive to the more conciliatory articles of other writers, as to those of Mr. Edward Dicey on "England and Germany" in the January and February numbers of the *Empire Review*, in which he expressed disapproval of the Unionist attacks on Germany during the election, and pleaded for friendship between the two countries. Their friendship would ensure the peace of Europe, whilst conflict between them would be highly disastrous for the whole world. It had been foolish to talk of a danger of war, when there was no sign of such danger. He had no more belief in a German intention of war against England than in such an English intention against Germany; and if Germany was willing to pay the cost of a fleet, it was no function of ours to hinder her (*ib.* x. 14, 62). Such an utterance of common sense was so unusual that the effect it produced in Germany shows at how small a cost of words peace might have been preserved.

But nothing could prevail against the panic-mongers, whose appeals to fears and passions were more numerous and persistent than any appeals to reason. Such an appeal to reason was made by the King on the occasion of the Kaiser's birthday (January 27th), when he expressed in a letter to his nephew a strong wish for the co-operation of England and Germany on behalf of European peace, which together they could always ensure (Lord Esher's *Influence of King Edward*, 56). The Kaiser's answer is at present unknown. Another appeal to reason was made on the same occasion by Count Metternich, the German Ambassador in London, who at a banquet at the Hotel Cecil tried to combat the fictitious nervousness of the day.

He denied that Germany had any thought of further war, or aspirations for more territory; her sole concern was for her industrial development: she desired new markets for her ever-increasing export trade; and that was all that was meant by her *Weltpolitik*. She was under no necessity for wishing to become the strongest Power at sea, nor had she any intention of competing for world-supremacy (*Ann. Reg.*, 1910, 14). Prince Henry of Prussia, on his visit to the King and Queen, made a similar declaration on February 23rd, in reply to an address of welcome from the Anglo-German Friendship Committee. He hoped that English confidence in the German Government and Emperor would correspond with Germany's confidence in the "dearly beloved and much-respected" Sovereign of Great Britain and her Government. Such assurances had been made over and over again by Prince Bülow and others; but they beat in vain against the political advantage which the theory of invincible German enmity conferred on the Unionist political programme. In consequence, the Navy Estimates for the year soared up to 40 millions: a sum which no Tory Government would have ventured to propose, but which the infusion of the Liberal Ministry by Liberal Imperialism rendered easily attainable.

On March 7th the King left England for Biarritz, taking Paris on the way. The *entente* with France had developed into something very indistinguishable from an alliance, and the words of Lord Palmerston to Lord Clarendon of September 20, 1857, seemed wellnigh forgotten: "In our alliance with France we are riding a runaway horse, and must always be on our guard." But it was health rather than politics that now drew the King to Biarritz. Before he left, the Convocations of York and Canterbury presented him with addresses recognizing his efforts for the peace of the world, and drawing from him the answer that his constant prayer was that his country might be spared the perils and miseries of war involving the ruin of millions. But, though it is pleasing to think of this recognition of his work as his last contact with the world of politics, the

prospect of peace was seldom less promising either at home or abroad.

At home the collision between the two Houses seemed hardly terminable without a dangerous resort to the Royal prerogative, and the resolutions introduced on March 21st for the curtailment of the Lords' Veto, followed as they were by excited debates, went to the very roots of the Constitutional fabric. Foreign opinion regarded April 14th as one of the great days of English history (*Schiemann*, x. 151), when Asquith declared that, if a fresh dissolution took place, no Liberal Ministry would take office except on conditions involving the immediate passing into law of the nation's decision. On April 26th, at the Albert Hall, Mr. Balfour told the Primrose League that this implied promise to induce the Sovereign to make such a use of his prerogative as to create Peers threatened the country, not only with a revolution, but with a revolution which carried within it the seeds of other revolutions. This, of course, has always been said of all great changes, whether beneficent or otherwise. In any case that was the deplorable state of feeling which the King found rending the country when he returned from abroad. But one stumbling-block had been removed. The much-abused and rejected Finance Bill of the previous year, after surviving endless amendments and criticism, had passed the Commons on April 27th, and on the day of his return, after only three hours' debate in the Lords, it passed through all its stages preparatory to receiving the Royal Assent on April 29th.

But the King, alas! was to take no further part in the political life of the nation; and his death on May 6th threw his subjects into more than ordinary grief for the loss of a Sovereign long endeared to them by the ties of a political sympathy and of a community of interest in all varieties of the pleasures of life. Even in an enemy country, such as Germany had become, it was felt that a great political force had vanished from the world, and there was the fullest recognition and admiration of his qualities as a statesman.

And in his own country seldom had a Sovereign been more beloved of his people. It was felt that he had successfully erected impassable barriers against foreign hostility. Even Count Reventlow did justice to the skill and constancy with which the King, from the beginning of his reign to its end, had pursued this definite aim, and striven to reduce the German Empire to a secondary place in the European community (394). The Foreign Secretaries of his time, Lord Lansdowne and Sir E. Grey, belonging to different political parties, knew no difference of party in pursuit of their Sovereign's plan of forming a league of defence against a common foe. But, as Lord Esher has well pointed out, Defence and Offence tend in practice to become synonymous words. "The British people," he wrote, "are warlike and aggressive," and have never contemplated in their military plans nothing but mere operations of defence (*Influence of King Edward*, 185). And so it came to pass that a policy declared to be one of defence against Germany was taken in that country for a policy of definite hostility. And in every country it is this implication of offence in the word "defence" which keeps alive in perpetuity the chronic *malaise* of the world.

The King's reputation for statesmanship must always rest on the success and the consequence of his policy for the encirclement of Germany. It has often been denied that this was his policy; it was only a "prevalent theory" in Germany, according to Mr. Cuthbert Maugham in the *Annual Register* (1910, 114). And Sir E. Grey, wrote Count Benckendorff, the Russian Ambassador in London, on January 26, 1912, always denied that there had been any wish to isolate Germany; for that such isolation would constitute a danger to the world's peace, and it would be a mistake to attempt to destroy the Triple Alliance (*Siebert*, 743).

But, if the whole thing was a myth and a delusion, on what does the King's reputation rest? And if the impression was false, that the Dual and Triple Entente were meant as a warning or menace to Germany, what misfor-

tune could have been greater than the creation of an impression which produced in Europe such an atmosphere of war? The effect of the German error, if error it was, was disastrous in the highest degree, and it is by the results of political action rather than by its intention that the merits of statesmen must be judged.

And how little was done to prevent such an impression of hostility to Germany from becoming the current creed of the political world is shown not only by the universality in Germany of the belief in the isolation policy, but by its general acceptance both in neutral countries like Belgium and in our own country. The Belgian Ministers in the chief Courts of Europe were of one accord on this subject, nor can they have had any motive for collusion. M. de Cartier, Belgian Chargé d'Affaires in London, writes on March 28th, 1907, of "the whole effort" of English diplomacy as "directed to the isolation of Germany." And so Baron Greindl, from Berlin on April 17, 1907, writes of "the campaign to isolate Germany" as being "personally directed with as much perseverance as success by His Majesty King Edward VII." Count de Lalaing, from London, writes on May 24th of the same year of King Edward as not having been "above putting his personal influence at the service" of this isolation policy; and on June 19, 1907, of England's policy as determined "by every sort of means to isolate the German Empire." Again, Baron Greindl writes on January 27, 1908: "M. Delcassé plumes himself on having preserved the world's peace, thanks to the campaign for the isolation of Germany that he carried on in concert with the King of England." And the same witness attests the existence in England of the same belief as held and propagated by our Press. The mistrust between England and Germany, he says, was "still further fostered by the personal zeal shown by the King of England in making *ententes* with the whole world, excepting Germany, and yet he has no grievance against her that can be stated. The Press makes it worse by representing each success won by England in the field of foreign politics as contributing to

the isolation of Germany as its final object" (May 30, 1907). Nor can there be any doubt that it was to the general belief in the policy thus attributed to the King that his great popularity at home was mainly due. "The King and his counsellors," wrote Mr. Robert Blatchford, editor of the *Clarion*, in the *Daily Mail* of December 14, 1909, "have strained every nerve to establish *ententes* with Russia and with Italy; and have formed an *entente* with France, and as well with Japan. Why? To isolate Germany." A belief, however universal, may be erroneous, but, if it was so in this case, on what distinctly does the King's title rest as a statesman who made peace his first object?

In this respect he can only be judged by the good and bad consequences that his policy entailed. On the credit side stands our reconciliation with France and with Russia: two results of incalculable value to his country. On the other side stands that enmity with Germany which was the sure seed of future war. By the time the King died almost the whole of Europe stood in battle array against Germany. Hardly a year passed between 1904 and 1910 in which the rival camps of Europe did not narrowly escape from coming to blows; the whole reign was a series of dangerous crises; nor is there any evidence to show that any of these, like the Bosnian crisis of 1908 and 1909, were passed in safety in consequence of any action taken by the King. And only four years after his death the war began, with the several combatants ranged against one another in exact accordance with the plan marked out for them.

But, though the whole reign was a preparation and education for a war accepted as inevitable, such a war as ensued could have had no place in the King's wishes. He would have sickened at the bare thought of the horror, had he foreseen the nature of the spectre he was unwittingly evoking by entangling us in the fortunes of France in her age-long conflict with her neighbours beyond the Rhine. France's desire for revenge for 1870, for the recovery of her lost provinces, was natural enough; it never lapsed;

and the King was the last man to be ignorant of this longing for revenge, or to be unaware that the primary condition of any attachment to France was assistance in its satisfaction. Can it be that we were beguiled or entrapped into a policy that had this hope behind it, and ultimately its realization? Was the King, or was M. Delcassé, the real author of the Dual Entente and of its secret commitments? In either case it is far from evident that even the peaceful occupation of Egypt was not a dear price to pay for getting entangled in the Franco-German quarrel and becoming an instrument of French ambitions. For it is highly probable that, but for our backing, no fresh Franco-German war would have been fought in 1914, and therefore no European war: to the undeniable and incalculable benefit of this country and of the world. The sum of 8,000 millions is a very small part of the price we have had to pay for departing from our traditional policy of abstention from Continental quarrels, and for committing ourselves for generations to come to an attitude of enmity and antipathy to the Teutonic Powers of Europe. No gains that may have accrued to us as the results of the war are likely ever to compensate us for the moral damage of that single consequence.

The lapse of time has made it possible to take a broad view of the King's reign; to regard it as a whole, as apart from its isolated episodes to which contemporary judgment was necessarily confined. It is now plain that his policy, though achieving peace in some directions, was in essence a policy of war, and one that ended in war. The panic of a German invasion, sustained by the Press during the whole decade, failed of such discouragement as might have prevented a needless enmity to arise between us and Germany. The King seems to have shared the popular belief in the will and power of Germany to invade us, despite Lord Fisher's ridicule of the notion, though he shrank from his First Lord's counsel to destroy the German Fleet whilst still in its immaturity. Nor did the King always rise superior to some of the phantom fears that

sprang from invented rumours. A case in point occurred when he was Prince of Wales and was much perturbed by an anonymous memorandum that reached him at Copenhagen to the effect that Germany had sounded Russia and France as to whether they would join her in a war against us with a view to a partition between them of Africa, India, and the Pacific, but that France and Russia had refused the temptation. And the Prince had been told that German Generals were working out a plan of campaign for marching with a Russian army upon Egypt and India. But Eckhardstein happily disabused him of this nightmare (166). A somewhat similar story is told by W. S. Blunt of a rumour in 1906, to which the King is said to have lent credence. The rumour was that the Kaiser, as soon as he was ready, meant to throw a *corps d'armée* or two into our defenceless land, and then proclaim that he had come, not as an enemy to the King, but as his grandmother's grandson, to deliver him from the Socialist gang which was ruining England. Then the Kaiser, in conjunction with the King, would dissolve Parliament and re-establish the King's autocratic rule as a feudatory of the German Empire (*Diaries*, ii. 218). The world must have been in a strange state for a programme of this sort to have found belief anywhere. It was in line with the ridiculous visions of *Germania Triumphans.*

The *entente* with France did not make for the peace of the world, inasmuch as by the nature of things it aroused the alarm of Germany. The King admitted to Eckhardstein that it was partly meant as a warning to Germany, and Wyndham told Blunt that the promise of military aid to France belonged to it from the first. We were, indeed, not committed to France by a definite treaty that was binding on Parliament, but by a secret understanding that bound us to France by the greatest of all obligations, the obligation of honour. Had it not been so, there was nothing in our differences with Germany that admitted not of pacific settlement. War with Germany was not in itself inevitable, but our pact with France went far so to make it. When Germany came to know or suspect our

military and naval conversations or plans for a war against her, mistrust and hostility were bound to arise, and friendly relations to become increasingly difficult.

King Edward's policy worked itself out with absolute success, and the close connection between his political premises and their conclusion will ensure the permanence of his political fame. But were his premises correct? Given the premise that Germany was a necessary enemy, and that war with her for maritime supremacy belonged to the unalterable destinies of history, no scheme could have been better conceived or constructed than a coalition of Powers leagued together for her defeat and destruction. But this premise was not only never proved, but was in itself contrary both to evidence and to probability. A cooler judgment of the circumstances of Germany, less regard for the sayings and doings of Admiral Tirpitz and his school, a greater indifference to the clamour of the Pan-German and of our own Jingo Press, would have probably preserved the peace of Europe as effectually as a policy that was mainly based on emotions of groundless alarm. Like the other monarchs of his day, King Edward undoubtedly desired the peace of the world, acquiring justly the honourable title, previously acquired by Alexander III of Russia, of the "Peace-maker" (*Witte's Memoirs*, 44, 96); but he will rank in history rather as a peace-wisher than as a peace-maker, in accordance with the common lot of humanity to wish for one thing and to achieve its opposite. But he was so far happy in the time and circumstance of his death as to be conscious of having lived to effect the removal from his country of an imagined peril, and to be spared all anticipation of that overwhelming disaster to civilization in which all his diplomatic intrigues and strivings were destined so shortly to end.

It is needless to follow the events which led to that end after the King's life. With his death the clouds of war lifted for a moment. During nearly the whole of his reign the world had trembled on the brink of war; on

several occasions it had only just been averted; and how closely the King's life was bound up with that condition of things was shown by the sudden relaxation of tension which followed his decease. In Germany it was believed that King George V was more amicably disposed towards her than his father had been, and would gladly come to some understanding with her (*Schiemann*, x. 414, December 28, 1910). It was hoped that the new reign would usher in improved conditions. Baron Beyens, the Belgian Minister at Berlin, was told that when the Kaiser and the Crown Prince returned from England after the King's funeral, "both of them were convinced that the frigid terms on which the two Courts had stood for years past were about to be replaced by cordial intimacy, and that the causes of misunderstanding between the two nations would become a thing of the past." Even the Kaiser ceased to be the "monster unto many" that he had been for years. The sympathy he evinced to the Royal Family in their grief did much to assuage the bitter feelings that had so long been cultivated, and Germany recognized with thankfulness the friendlier feeling extended to him by the English Press (*ib.* x. 197, May 25th).

Accordingly when, in the May of the following year, 1911, the Kaiser, accompanied by the Kaiserin and the Princess Victoria, again visited London as the guest of the new King, the people lined the streets in rows to see them pass, waiting for hours to witness their return, and cheering them vociferously on their re-entrance to Buckingham Palace. Count de Lalaing, then the Belgian Minister in London, noticed how "this time the atmosphere was much more genial" than it had been four years before; there was no longer "the old distrust" that had marked the attitude of the people in 1907; the difference struck the observer as "remarkable." "It would seem," he wrote, "as though at the time of those *ententes* so dear to the late monarch the nation itself was conscious of the character of the policy being pursued towards Germany, and aware that the Government was openly making an attempt to encircle

Germany, which could not but create ill-feeling in Berlin." Count Benckendorff confirmed this account writing on May 23, 1911, of the warm reception accorded by the English Press to the Kaiser personally and to his family. Politics seem to have been ignored. In a long talk between the Kaiser and Mr. Asquith, the chief subject of conversation was the mutual influence of the races of mankind upon one another and the superiority of some of them over others. So Mr. Asquith, when asked about it, told the King (*Siebert*, 418). For the moment it seemed as if an Anglo-German Entente no longer lay beyond the better possibilities of the near future.

But this proved to be no more than a fallacious gleam of hope; for the French occupation of Fez again caused the Moroccan question to become acute. Germany replied to the challenge thus thrown out to her by the sending of the *Panther* gunboat to Agadir in July 1911, to which Mr. Lloyd George, with the previous approval of Mr. Asquith and Sir E. Grey, replied by a provocatively bellicose speech at the Mansion House, thereby reviving all the old animosity, and causing war again to loom on the horizon. Vain were all later efforts to restore amicable relations between two countries that ought never to have become estranged; there was henceforth no real possibility of arresting the downward rush to that mutual conflict which the events of so many years had fixed indelibly on the book of Fate. And in this rush all the countries concerned had their share of responsibility. But the result proved how vain is the attempt to keep the world at peace by setting one group of Powers in deadly antagonism against another group. That attempt reached its foredoomed failure, and the spirit of Militarism, so long cultivated by every nation as the sheet-anchor of its safety, ended in a struggle amongst all of them for their very existence.

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